







**THE**  
**L E T T E R S**  
**OF**  
**MRS. ELIZABETH MONTAGU.**





THE  
LETTERS  
OF  
MRS. ELIZABETH MONTAGU,  
WITH SOME OF THE LETTERS OF HER  
CORRESPONDENTS.

PART THE FIRST,  
CONTAINING HER LETTERS FROM AN EARLY AGE  
TO THE AGE OF TWENTY-THREE.

PUBLISHED BY  
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HER NEPHEW AND EXECUTOR.

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MRS. MONTAGU'S LETTERS,  
&c.

*To the Rev. Mr. and Mrs. Freind.*

*Bullstrode, Tuesday the 24th, 1741.*

Two so united in my thoughts shall not be separated in my words, so my good cousins accept my salutations from the country. I took leave of our smoky metropolis on Monday morning, and changed the scene for one better suited to the season. The agreeable freedom I live in, and the rural beauties of the place, would persuade me I was in the plains of Arcadia; but the magnificence of the building, under whose gilded roofs I dwell, has a pomp far beyond pastoral. In one

thing I fall short of Chloe and Phillis, I have no Pastor fido, no languishing Corydon to sigh with the zephyrs, and complain to the murmuring brooks ; but those things are unnecessary to a heart taken up, and sufficiently softened by friendship. Here I know Mrs. Freind and you shake your heads, and think a little *bergerie* a proper amusement for the country ; but, in my opinion, friendship is preferable to love. The presence of a friend is delightful, their absence supportable ; delicacy without jealousy, and tenderness without weakness, transports without madness, and pleasure without satiety. No fear that caprice should destroy what reason established ; but even time, which perfects friendship, destroys love. I may now say this to you, who, from constant lovers, are become faithful friends. I congratulate your change ; to have passed from hope to security, and from admiration to esteem. If you knew the charming friend I am with, you would not wonder at my encomiums upon friendship, which she makes one taste in

its greatest perfection. I have greater pleasure in walking in these fine gardens because they are her's; and indeed the place is very delightful. I am sorry to think I have lost so much sun shine in town. Society, and coal fires, are very proper for frost; but solitude and green trees for summer. Then the *care selve beate* come in season, and Philomel sings sweeter than Farinelli. The beasts of the field, and the birds of the air, are better company than the beau monde; and a butterfly and a magpye, in my opinion, are at all times better company than a fop or a coxcomb. It is the necessity of the one to be gaudy, and of the other to chatter; but where folly and foppery are by choice, my contempt must attend the absurdity. I like an owl, very often, better than an alderman; a spaniel better than a courtier; and a hound is more sagacious than a fox-hunter; for a fox-hunter is only the follower of another creature's instinct, and is but a second instrument in the important affair of killing a fox. I could

say a great deal more of them, if ~~stopper~~ was not ready ; so leaving you to balance their merits, and determine their sagacity, I must take my leave, only desiring my compliments to Mrs. Freind and the Doctor ; if, at his years and wisdom, things so trifling as women, and compliments, can take any place in his remembrance. Pray let me hear from the writing half very soon ; the husband is always allowed to be the head, and I think in your family he is the hand too. A letter directed to Bullstrode, by Gerard's bag, will find and rejoice

your most faithful friend,

and affectionate cousin.

ELIZABETH ROBINSON.

•• This letter properly belongs to a former year, and to some previous visit to Bullstrode, but having no other date than Tuesday, 24th, the year cannot be ascertained. The date 1741, is added to recall to the reader the progress of the series.

*To the Rev. Mr. Freind.*

*Bullstrode.*

SIR,

I CANNOT describe to you the uneasiness and anxiety I suffered from your silence, nor the joy to be awakened from my melancholy dreams of you, by the pleasure of a letter, which assured me of the health and friendship of you and yours. My opinion of your good nature made me ascribe your silence to any thing but a neglect of telling me what would make me easy ; and I hoped you knew my heart too well to think I could ever be so while I imagined my friends were ill. I assure you my not writing two letters for one, more immediately arose from no point of ceremony, but expectation of hearing from you ; and want of leisure made me defer it till the time of your silence, joined to the report of my sister, who complained with more fear than anger of the same thing, gave me terrible apprehensions for you. And then I could



do it in no other manner than in that letter which was so long before it got to your hands. Your making no reply to it confirmed me in my fears; for I knew you could not forget a friend in affliction, nor deny a few words to restore them to their peace of mind. I spoke of my uneasiness to every body; and Mr. John Hay, who is with us, was so good as to tell me, if he had had any correspondents in that part of the world, he would have enquired after you. The Duke of Portland, who asked me once, to whom the seal you had made use of belonged, came into my apartment, about a week ago, with great joy and haste, saying he had got the letter I had been grieving for; upon which I snatched it out of his hand, when, to my inexpressible disappointment, I found it came from another hand. This morning he told me he was sure it was right; but I shook my head, and said I was afraid not; but this time the joy recompensed the chagrin I had suffered before. I wish Mrs. Freind and you much joy of what for a little while may be ra-

ther troublesome ; but I hope by future satisfaction she will find herself greatly recompensed for the present uneasiness. I thank you for your well meant wishes to me upon that head ; but I have lately studied my own foibles, and I have found out I should make a very silly wife, and an extremely foolish mother, and so have as far resolved, as is consistent with deference to reason and advice, never to trouble any man, or spoil any children. I already love too many people in this world to enjoy a perfect tranquillity ; and I do not care to have any more strings to pull my heart ; it is very tender, a small matter hurts it, a great one would break it. I have been lately a little out of spirits about my incomparable Dutchess ; she has been a good deal indisposed, but by bleeding and care she is much better, I wish I could say well. Her Grace has a friendship for me I can never find in any one else ; nor indeed would it give me the same pleasure from any other person ; because then I must be ungrateful, as it would be impossible for me to

love any one as I do her. The duty and love I owe at home will make me leave her next spring, but (which is a secret) I do not propose to do it before. No one can imagine the pain it will give me to do it then, but Pea. Her Grace can hardly bear I should mention leaving her. It would make those who are above the weaknesses of the heart, laugh to see us sometimes both betrayed into tears upon talking of it. What makes it more terrible to me is, that I find upon every uneasiness of mind or body she flies to me for comfort; her heart and constitution are of the tenderest sort; thank God, I leave her in the hands of the best of husbands, so I shall part with the melancholy satisfaction of thinking I leave her less unhappy than I go. We have often disputed which would be most miserable, and strive for the painful pre-eminence of misery as much as the ambitious could for that of greatness. All I have said upon this head is only to Mrs. Freind and yourself. Why should you rather advise me to embark upon the sea of fortune in a

wherry than in a ship? Are not shallows as dangerous as gulphs? Do not the sails, blown by the gale of prosperity, better stem the tide of the times than the little boat that depends upon the reflux of a little stream? The rich freight lies securely at anchor while the small fishing boat is forced to put out in stormy weather, barked at by the Charybdis of power, and perhaps swallowed by the Scylla of law. The lofty cedar is only shook by the storms of heaven; the ivy is trod by every passenger. Perhaps I am a Babelist, and would build to my confusion; but at present, I own, if I am to be bound to a vessel, I wish it may be a first rate. I have no schemes at present in my head, but be assured they will always be consistent as much with private happiness as public opinion. I shall wear no jewel at my heart whose intrinsic value does not far exceed the gold it is set in, for mercenary as what I have said may appear, I shall ever think wisdom is better than gold, yea, than much fine gold. If I could have given you any

satisfactory account of the person's return, I should not have made you wait so long for it, but here no one knows more than common report, which says he is to bring over the sister of the Prince of Hesse for a queen, and to leave Madame behind. This I take to be the invention of brains whose product would be quite lost if wonder and falsehood did not preserve it. You must know this family are but passive courtiers, and so know nothing of the secrets of ———. I wish your friends success in all their undertakings, and approve your not committing their intentions to paper, for certainly the trust of seals is too often violated. My letter was not opened, but having taken up some black wax, instead of red and gold, I hastily sealed with it, without knowing what I had done; when I perceived my mistake I covered it with the red for fear you should apprehend some misfortune had happened to our family. I had a letter this morning from my dear Pea, full of tender concern for you and Mrs. Freind; to-night I shall relieve her

anxiety by writing her word I have heard from you, but pray tell it her yourself. Lord and Lady O — are here now ; My-lord went down to Bath for a week, about three weeks ago, to see the place, and made a visit to my little cousin Robert, but the young gentleman was abroad. Have you conversed so long with the curious as not to know there is a difference between loving books and loving reading ? How many buy books they do not care to read ; others read books they do not care to buy. Some men are learned amongst the great, but many more of them may properly be said to be bookish. Where some sense, but more estate, “ kind heaven to a well lotted peer has given,” with money he purchases volumes, but seldom by industry acquires knowledge. They buy manuscripts who cannot write, and classics, though they cannot read ; they empty their pockets without furnishing their heads, and by their search after knowledge, as well as Solomon, teach us that that also is vanity. I hope our friend, Master Robert, will

show us one day that he knows how to make the best use of books; I wish that by a thousand pleasures he may give you, he may make you as happy a father as you have been a dutiful son, and that the reciprocal delight of a good parent, and obedient and worthy child, may pass to another generation, as you and the Doctor have felt it in this. This, with all blessings, and the success of every wish you form, is the sincere and fervent prayer of your most faithful friend,

and affectionate cousin,

ELIZ. ROBINSON.

I ought to make apologies for the length of this letter, and for a thousand faults, too visible to you for it to be necessary to name them; but I beg you would burn it, least some accident should produce it to eyes less partial than your own. I shall be very glad to hear from Mrs. Freind, but would not, in her present state of health, put her to any pain to give me pleasure; assure her of my sincere respects. Mr. Hay desires I would

insert his compliments: I wish I could tell you he was recovered, but he has had two fits lately, and is but weak, I mean in body, in sense and patience strong.

*To Mrs. Robinson.*

*Bullstrode.*

MADAM,

I CANNOT help troubling you with letters sometimes, as you are so good as to let me hear from you, which I assure you, though perhaps you think I am entirely taken up with diversions, is a great pleasure to me. I heartily congratulate you upon your deliverance from the elegant Mr. B—— and the gormandizing Dean. We this day had an epicure to dine with us who talked so much of eating, that his conversation gave me a dinner. The gentleman was just come from abroad, and declared he thought nothing he had met with in travelling equal to an haunch of



English venison, and that for his part he preferred England to any other country, because catables of all sorts were here in the greatest perfection. He was so loquacious and so voracious it was impossible to determine whether he eat or talked most, but for two hours his unwearied employment was the praise and practice of eating. There was not a proverb which tended to this darling subject that he did not repeat ; but though he practises gluttony himself he preaches abstinence to his family. One should imagine the daughters of an epicure would be better fed than taught, but that is not the case here ; he prescribes lean meat and water, while he drinks wine and eats of the fat of the land. I never was in company with our dean but his conversation ran upon eating ; he must certainly preach very bad fast sermons, but for the fatted calf, the quails, and manna in the wilderness, no man could make a better discourse upon them. Sir Hugh Smithson is married to Lady Betty Seymour, and Lady Betty Montagu to Sir

Danvers Osborn, that is all the news I hear. The Dutchess of Dorset has had fine presents upon going over with the Princess of Hesse ; the Prince presented her with a gold tea-pot, tea-kettle and lamp, and Lady Caroline Sackville with a set of Dresden, and a diamond solitaire ; the Dutchess had likewise a set of Dresden tea-cups and a service of Dresden china, and the King gave her a gold snuff-box with a thousand pound bank bill in it. The Duke and Dutchess of ———, according to the fashion of the times, are going to part, but I believe the cause is hatred of each other, not love of any one else. The Duke is come to frank our letters, and supper is on the table, so I can only add my compliments to all the family.

I am, Madam,  
your most dutiful daughter,  
E. ROBINSON.

*To Mattheze Robinson, Esq. her Father.*

*Bullstrode.*

SIR,

IF my time had concurred with my inclination to write to you, and my readiness to return thanks for the drawing; you would have heard from me long ago; the apron will be fit for a Dutchess if it is a tolerable imitation of the pattern: her Grace charges me to make compliments for her suitable to the occasion, which I should do, if I did not know you could imagine *mille gentilleses* that I cannot express; so please to dress up your thoughts in the elegant habit of your own phrase, and then they will be fit for the person and the occasion, proper for the most finished Dutchess and most finished apron. Lord ——— and George Vertue arrived here last night after a ramble, which the best geographer could hardly describe; they have been hunting church-yards, and reading the history of mankind upon grave-stones; a short his-

tory ; but comprehensive of all the generality do, to be born and to die. Self-love orders that to be engraved in lasting characters which reason would wish to forget. Of what worth is remembrance without praise ? Then the inscription humbly begs the gentle reader to weep because Tom-a-Stiles, born 1700, did nothing till he died, 1730, when he had nothing else to do. One may weep indeed to see men live idle, and die vain. If ever I have an inscription over me it shall be without a name ; and only, Here lies one, whom, having done no harm, no one should censure, and having done no good, no one can commend ; who, for past folly only asks oblivion. So shall my friends be discharged of neglect and myself of partiality to my memory. Dr. Grey is employed in a work which is to make its appearance in public. You would not easily guess it, I believe ; 'tis no perplexity upon mysteries, no refutation of the doctrine of transubstantiation, no explanation of the catechism, but a thing for which his serious qualifications do not seem very

fit; he is writing notes upon Hudibras; his dullness may be a proper ballast for doggerel; it is better, however, his stupidity should make jest dull, than serious and sacred things ridiculous; which, as far as false light could do with persons of giddy imagination, he might have done had he applied his goose quill again to controversy. To an honest good man as he is, it must be a sort of comfort, did he know it, that his folly was innocent. We are all shivering with the apprehensions of another hard frost: there was a terrible storm here on Saturday night. If I had the descriptive genius of a news writer I would give you a magnificent account of the damage the wind has done; but not having a hurly-burly imagination, nor a command of similes proper for a storm, I shall not be able (according to the phrase of one of our tragedians) “to deck my tale with decent horrors.”

I am, Sir,  
 your most dutiful daughter,  
 E. ROBINSON.

*To Miss S. Robinson.*

*Bullstrode.*

DEAR SISTER,

IN the regions of plenty to complain of want is unreasonable, but I have no more paper than the sheet I am writing upon, and I cannot disturb the Duke to go into his library, for he is set down by the fire very comfortably, and the Dutchess is occupied in working a cushion ; so that I do not like to make them remove, and still less to ask for the key of the Dutchess's escrutoire, as I think it is a thing people should only part with for their own convenience. You are very complaisant in saying you would read a book on my recommendation ; but you would hold my heroes in contempt, who have only mustaches, while your Horatius Cocles, (a strong man he was,) and your Coriolanus, with the furious family of the Gracchi, have fine beards of an ell long : I do not think Mr. S——'s verses

will be much the worse for wear ; so he may lay them up for his son. Pray are they entailed on the family, or did he rob old Time's foul bag of them ? The verses upon C—— are admirable. I have known a brand lighted at a lady's eyes, but I never heard of a poker, tongs, and fire-shovel applied to them. As the gentleman loves a medley of godheads, he should have borrowed the tongs of Vulcan, or have robbed Prometheus, for I think he was a blacksmith. My laughter at the odd verses reminds me of the French proverb, “ *La poêle se moque du fourgon,*” for I am quite as ridiculously celebrated as her Ladyship. I am sorry to find Phœbus decks no more Daphnes with laurel. Why will Laura make verses ? I am tired of seeing roses and lilies envious, violets blush blue terribly, but there is no end of folly ! Pegasus hates a side-saddle ; Parnassus maintains the Salique law ; what can we do ? “ *Il ne tombe pas en quenouille.*”

Choose for our command,  
Some peaceful province in acrostic land.

We may inspire verses, if we cannot write them. Some are fools for our sakes, others are witty for our honour. The advantages of these things cannot be set forth by inch of paper; a great genius and a little paper are terrible. Believe, I desire, that I suppress a thousand pretty things, and that for many well imagined, I conclude with one well affirmed, which is, that I am

your most affectionate sister,

E. R.

*To the Same.*

*Bullstrode, November 24, 1741.*

DEAR SISTER,

I AM glad you liked my panegyric of vanity; really it was a pure motion of gratitude in me; as it was the only thing that ever recommended me to myself, I thought I was in duty bound to recommend it to others. Through it I have been pleased with the looking-glass,



reconciled to the echo, and made fond of pen and ink ; take but this my indulgent friend and constant companion from me, I shall neither look, talk, nor write to my satisfaction. All things and circumstances it has represented favourably to me ; flattery, it suggested, was truth, and censure was envy ; kindness was the reward, malice the consequence of my merit ; so content with myself I was pleased with every thing, despised all cross accidents as things below my desert, enjoyed all lucky ones as equal to it ; happy to think I deserved happiness, even when I felt inconveniences. To this indulgent vanity do I owe the hopes of some time acquitting my obligations to you, and the present imagination of deserving a third part of the love you have for me. When this passion, so decried in reputation, has so enhanced my virtues, covered my faults, increased my pleasures, and allayed my pains, shall I leave it to be demolished by its enemy and mine, humility, which has ever been setting me at variance with myself,

always finding faults in my person or understanding, and drawing caricatures of me, making me see I deserved very little of my own esteem, and none at all of yours? Sure no one has more reason to quarrel with it, as there is no one to whom it has made ruder remonstrances. An unmannerly companion as it is, let it be fed upon pulse and water, and clothed in sackcloth and ashes. Higher feeding puffs up vanity, and will expel humility presently. It will no more pass through brocade, than a witch will step over a horse-shoe. Riches and titles, with a little good opinion mixed up with flattery, and shook together once a day, will cure the most stubborn fit of humility. But you will not join with me in my resentment against humility; for as a servant of truth it is a friend to you: therefore I will spare it, and only wish its visits to me may not be too long or too frequent, but that,

Dear vanity, I may live with thee  
In unproved pleasures free.

It has lengthened my letter, and now comes in at the conclusion, for my vanity is never stronger or happier, than when I subscribe myself, what I am vain of being, my dearest,

your most affectionate sister,  
and sincere friend,

E. ROBINSON.

*To the Same.*

*Bullstrode.*

MY DEAR SISTER,

My spirits have been of late so indifferent that they have made me a very bad correspondent. To-night they are better, for the Dutchess is as well as one could expect, and Mr. Hay, who has had a fit, is much recovered. The trial of the witch is very extraordinary; I read it many years ago, when I rather wondered that such things could be done, than believed they were only reported. But I am now

well convinced a woman is never reputed a witch till she has done being so. You would laugh to see how formally Lord Bacon accounts for the witchcraft of eyes, either by love or malice. He has lately been amongst our studies, and I plainly see lovers understand that affair much better than sages. The heavenly rhetoric of the eye, against which the world cannot hold argument, can no more be described than resisted by wisdom; but honour, wealth, and wit and beauty, to the power of love submit. The strength of Sampson, the valour of Hercules, and the wisdom of Solomon could not escape it. What then may the Dalilahs and Omphales of this age do with the puny modern beaux! Many of them are, like larks, best caught with a looking-glass. The representation of them may not please you, though it does themselves, so I will leave them, and desire you to return my best thanks to my papa for his letter, and the favour of his pattern. I like your study in Italian much better than my own; but we have no good

Italian books here, so I read rather for the language than the subject. A tale in verse is a mere story in prose. Boccace is reckoned a very elegant writer as to style, but a bagatelle is a bagatelle, let the envelope be what it will. I wish Lady T. B—— would produce her mouse, or deliver Sandys, if she will not let him deliver her. I have not been at Windsor Assembly yet, nor indeed have I any prospect of it at present, for my Lady Dutchess's confinement will make her very tender. One of the families to whom I did the honours of the house, were of the drollest sort. I will only tell you their names, which were Basil, Ball, and Garlic; all description must fall short; they are originals of which no copy can be taken, and are beyond all jest. Sir W—— is a clown; no red waistcoat ever contained a more errant country squire; he is as heavy as the Sunday's pudding that smokes upon his hospitable board. But I must end my letter,

and am ever affectionately your's

ELIZ. ROBINSON.

*To the Rev. Mr. Freind.*

SIR,

I AM sorry fate is so much my enemy as to interpose her decrees against your writing to me with the same readiness of performance as of inclination. I was indeed a little surprized to hear a divine had seduced a captain; I fancy your engagement was over in less time than you imagined, if the conversation was to be only my panegyric; for upon making a favourable account of my good qualities and all that partiality, compliment, and imagination could say upon them, I really think half an hour would amply take in all that could be devised and said upon the subject; I am very sorry if the poor man is really what you think, unhappy; if his case is uneasy I am sure it is desperate. Complaint, I hope, is more the language, than misery the condition of lovers. To speak ingenuously, you men use us oddly enough; you adore the pride, flatter the vanity, gratify the ill nature,

and obey the tyranny that insults you ; then slight the love, despise the affection, and enslave the obedience, that would make you happy. When frowning mistresses we are awful goddesses ; when submissive wives, despicable mortals. There are two excellent lines which have made me ever deaf to the voice of the charmer, charmed he ever so sweetly,

The humblest lover, when he lowest lies,  
Submits to conquer, and but kneels to rise.

Flattery has ever been the ladder to power, and I have detested its inverted effects of worshipping us into slavery while it has pretended to adore us to deification. If ever I commit my happiness to the hands of any person it must be to one whose indulgence I can trust, for flattery I cannot believe ; I am sure I have faults, and am convinced a husband will find them, but wish he may forgive them. But vanity is apt to seek the admirer rather than the friend, not considering that the passion of love may, but the affection of esteem can never degenerate to dislike.

I do not mean to exclude love, but I mean to guard against the fondness that arises from personal advantages. This may be distinguished from the consent of the mind to a joint admiration of the virtues and beauties of a mistress; for though they both pretend alike the admiration of the united qualifications, yet it is necessary to recollect whether the eyes did not choose for the mind. I have known many men see all the cardinal virtues in a good complexion, and every ornament of a character in a pair of fine eyes, and they have married these perfections, which, perhaps, might shine and bloom a twelvemonth, and then, alas! it appeared these fair characters were only written in white and red. A long and intimate acquaintance is the best presage of future agreement. I have strengthened this argument to myself by the example of you and Mrs. Freind. I hope, in my long and tedious dissertation, I have said nothing disrespectful of love. As for your particular inducement to it, I cannot tell whether it was beauty or good



qualities, they being united in her in a degree of perfection not to be excelled ; but though in degree equal, not being equal in kind, I am sure the qualities of the mind had preference as the most worthy. Your description of your friend is very amiable, but indeed the qualities you commend are enough to render what you mention both improbable and unfit ; ambition hardly makes concessions to love, and is ever subject to repent the purchase, even of content, at the expence of greatness. Its wishes are rather for pomp than happiness. For what you would effect, you should find one rather tired of than desirous of greatness, who having found seeming good dearly purchased at the rate of real enjoyments, would be willing to reverse the bargain, and buy happiness at the expence of show. So to your worthy friend, according to his desert, I wish riches and alliance to help his laudable ambition. For myself, I wish the same advantages with one of established fortune, and character so established that one piece of generosity

should not hurt his fortune, nor one act of indiscretion prejudice his character ; for I would hardly be advanced to the detriment of an enemy, much less to the disadvantage of a friend.

I am

your's, &c.

E. ROBINSON.

*To Mrs. Donnellan.*

*Bullstrode, Dec. 2.*

DEAR MADAM,

YOU, who know that Time is double winged, and curls up his forelock toupet-fashion at Bullstrode, will not be surprized that I have not wrote to friends and sisters as I ought ; but indeed I have been dumb with a sore throat, and the shock of so unusual a distemper took away all power of writing ; and though my friends here were sensible I was much improved by the accident, I took it

grievously to heart. One would not part with one's darling folly for the finest accomplishment, or best qualification in the world; and truly, till my tongue could fidget, and my voice pronounce ten thousand words in five minutes, I was quite low spirited. I read dialogues, studied well-penned narrations, read whole books of question and answer, and in short meddled with no work that was not entitled a discourse upon something or other. But these were but the shadows of the felicity of prating. However, I am at last restored to the substantial bliss of talking all day long; and now in good health and high spirits enjoy the agreeable society here. Madam Pen is copying Sacharissa's picture from Vandyck, and does it with that felicity of genius that attends her in all her performances. I believe, could Waller see it, he would begin to make new verses on her, and ask of the picture, as he does of the image of his dream,

Where could'st thou find  
Shades to counterfeit that face?

If Sacharissa could have known the Stella\* of a future age would have copied her picture, I should not have blamed her for sitting for it; but for her, who knew not such future honours would attend her, to sit to a mercenary artist after she had been so pourtrayed in never-dying verse, and to wish to give any other impression of her face, was ill judged. The lover and the poet make the fairest and most beautiful representations; from Vandyck you judge she was a pretty woman; from Waller you imagine she was a charming goddess; and surely immortal verse is the Elysium of vanity!

Mrs. Delany brought us the good news of your being well, and I shall, this week, ask you in person how you do, and hope you will confirm the good account I heard of your health. Miss Dashwood left us two days ago, and Miss Parsons arrived here yesterday; Miss Granville, I fear, departs to-morrow on account of Mrs. Foley's coming to her at Windsor: this is the present state of Bullstrode. I need

\* Mrs. Pendarvis is here mistaken for the real Stella.

not tell you I am very happy here ; you know the persons that compose this society, and my regard for them, too well to doubt of it ; and indeed I am still more happy in seeing the Dutchess in better health and spirits than ever I knew her. Bullstrode is much improved without doors ; peace, cheerfulness, and joy, were always within ; so that new furniture and fine pictures hardly make an addition to its former charms. I hope you will go to the play with me very often. All rational entertainments are improved by your company ; and I think the plays may now be ranked in that class. Let us contrive to spend a good deal of time together, and not run to drums and routs ; for my part I hate drums, civil and military. A pacific tête-à-tête is much better. It is a most unreasonable thing to give up all one's time to people one does not like, merely because their footman brings one a card, and they light ten candles instead of two ; after that can one laugh at the fool that loses his time and his way, with following

will o'the wisp? I will follow illuminations no longer, but try rather to be guided by the light of reason to the company I like, than by the blaze of wax-lights to the house I do not; so expect me in your dressing room as constant as your India cabinet, and as chatty as your parrot. Pray how does Dr. Courayer do? Has he got rid of his cold? Say some kind things for me, most generous rival. Make my compliments to Mrs. Clayton and the Bishop,\* and to whoever enquires after me.

I am, dear Madam, &c. &c.

E. ROBINSON.

*To the Rev. Mr. Freind.*

*December 29, —*

SIR,

YOUR letters are always welcome to me, whether they congratulate me upon my happiness, or inform me of your health.

• Of Clogher.

I am now resolved to write you a long letter, while I am your plain, downright, country cousin, before I have breathed the London air, or have lost the least part of my Arcadian, sincerity and sobriety. I don't know whether it is not conceited to imagine, you will like me better while I am most myself, than when I am moulded by fashion into other people's form; the thought seems suggested by self-love, and therefore should appear suspicious to me, but I have always accustomed myself to appear to you without those disguises which we wear as ornaments with our acquaintance, and as armour with our enemies. But amongst friends, truth may appear with no other clothing than *la bienséance*. I shall certainly read Philippe de Comines as soon as I have an opportunity, and shall receive a double satisfaction in my entertainment and improvement, by knowing I owe it to you. I hope you will not suffer your diffidence to be so much my enemy, as to hinder your advising me in what you shall at any time think proper for me to

read; which, though it should be the terror of our sex, a folio, I would do with the encouragement of your recommendation. I was much entertained with a book I read lately, *l'Histoire du Ciel*. There is implanted in us a love of truth, and we are always pleased with any appearance of it, especially if it enlightens objects upon which time has thrown a veil of darkness. Perhaps you, who have found Apollo easy, ready, and gentle, will hardly be brought to change him for the laborious Horus; but for my part, I was so pleased to find the inexorable cruel Fates, gentle spinsters like myself, that I could not deny myself the satisfaction of belief; indeed, I was sorry to divest Minerva of peace and wisdom, but was comforted with the thought, that, like Ulysses, I had bound Proteus, and listened to the Sirens without being deluded: like Hercules I relieved the shoulders of Atlas, and as Diana, set at nought the frivolous bolt of Cupid. I crossed the Styx, and was not frightened at the barking of Cerberus, but wandered with pleasure in



the Elysian fields: in my return I found the Phoenix' nest, and looked at the Gorgon without terror. This clue to the labyrinth of mystery seems to lead to truth; but how many years was it before it regained its empire over fiction, which had so absolutely reigned in its stead? I was glad to see that even the greatest crime of mankind, idolatry, was error, and not perverseness; and that those religious rites were the effect of gratitude to the great dispenser of blessings, or the equitable orders of society. But how necessary is it that we should recommend every thing we do to the care of Providence, since the institution of piety and justice may, by human ignorance and folly, become a stumbling block unto nations, and an abomination unto the Lord, as the heathen worship was declared to be. I have read Davila in the native beauties of his own language, and am glad to find my opinion of him agree with yours. What can one say of those things which never become more comprehensible by being common? I could

never find out why many people that have a great deal of sense in themselves, should not distinguish it in persons or books. Were it the unhappiness of only a few to judge amiss in these things, one might ascribe it to prejudice or passion, or bad education; but it is so usual that one finds it in excellent minds without any of those preventions; and of ten wise persons one shall not find five judicious in these matters. I believe it is of great consequence to young people to read none but the very best authors, which will not be the case of the women while French trumpery is so much the fashion among them; the acquisition of that language being looked upon as a great benefit, without considering the quirks and the quiddities they study for it. The ingenious and admired St. Evremond splits a difference into such nice distinctions, and is often so enamoured with points, and antitheses, that I am almost afraid to trust myself with him. Among mean critics, the word-catcher that lives on syllables, does not appear so

despicable to me as the vile quibbler that sets them at variance, and from their strife composes a piece, as atheists make a world from the jar of atoms. Next Sunday I quit the peaceful groves and hospitable roof of Bullstrode, for the noisy, turbulent city ; my books and serious reflections are to be laid aside for the looking-glass and curling-irons, and from that time I am no longer a Pastorella, but propose to be as idle, as vain, and as impertinent as any one. If you will come to town, Mrs. Freind and you will find me, however, still so like myself as to be your sincere friend : but I shall trouble you with a good deal of my company, which you must take as the troublesome consequence of my esteem. I am much chagrined about my dear Pea, there is great danger of her being confined to the country for this year. Alas ! It is a disappointment as to London, and, what is worse, our separation will be continued by it. I hoped to have enjoyed her and my dear Dutchess, at the same time ; but why did I hope it, when I knew there

was no perfect happiness to be expected? Pleasures are purchased or paid with pain. I must take leave of a most amiable friend before I can see this dear, this charming sister; the thought of parting with the one and meeting the other, gives me great grief and pleasure, that sometimes, as you apply songs to me,

My face is like the April morn  
Clad in a winter's cloud.

My joy in seeing my sister will be such as I cannot think of without transport, and what pleasure is there in knowing I shall give her as much pleasure as I receive from her! Mutual affection is the felicity of love. I am glad that, of all blessings Providence has most lavishly bestowed upon me, that of friendship, for as I am most sensible to it, I am most thankful for it. Riches would not have made me so happy; they may purchase some moments of joy, but cannot years of content. A good friend alleviates every affliction, and soothes every care. I have been particularly fortunate

too in finding the best friends where nature's law directed, in my brothers and sister. My brother Robinson is at Cambridge now, I hope to see him in town soon after my arrival.

I have said a great deal of myself, but as I could not talk of a greater friend of your's, I hope it may be excused. I am glad my dear cousin was not hurt with the fright she was put into by the cry of Fire! I applauded her concern for her little boy. Our sex can have a care for others superior to fear for themselves, so their timorousness is not grounded upon the mean foundation of self-love, but rather that not being by education conversant with danger, they don't know how to make a right estimate of it; and therefore do not always properly proportion their apprehension to the occasion. I hear the Irish Adonis, Mr. Smith, is going to be married to Lady L—y W—th; Cupid always seemed to me a blunderer, and I begin to think he is Irish; he shoots no arrows but for that nation. I am very sorry for what you

tell me concerning Miss G——; it is hard she should suffer from merit, and for a friend. It is envy working upon folly which must have said what you tell me; 'I am sorry to be the occasion of her vexation, it is very unjust to every person whose name was used in it, they having all too much honour and prudence to act in that manner. Supper is upon table, or I should say more upon this head. As for your friend, of whom I know nothing, I can say nothing. Your esteem convinces me he is deserving and happy, and so shall leave him; and for myself I desire to remain, as I am,

your most sincere friend,

and obliged humble servant,

E. ROBINSON.

*To the Same.**Bullstrode.*

SIR,

FOR better things know in you than laziness, I shall so far respect that, as to address another letter to it, though my last lies unanswered. I am afraid the gentleman you went with to the tavern talked so much of me you have had quite a surfeit of me, and have been endeavouring to forget me ever since. By being blotted from your memory, I have avoided, perhaps, the greatest danger I ever was in of being vain, which I should have been shrewdly tempted to had I been much in your thoughts. I have thus far gone in a lofty style, so that I really believe you begin to think Eliza is in a downright passion; but that is not the case; her heart is warm with affection for her friends at all times, but never with anger; I have made excuses for your idleness you would not make yourself. I have made pleasure your excuse,

or business, or the constant employment of your life, the discharge of some duty : or suppose you only did not care to write to me, I could not with reason be angry at the omission. When you did, it was a favour ; when you do not it can be no transgression. The only thing that makes me wonder that you do not write to me is, that you (contrary to your general maxim, and rule of acting) lose an opportunity of conferring an obligation. If you received most pleasure by the correspondence, I should not be surprized at your neglecting it ; but as I am made most happy by it, I expected you would be more constant in it. The most excellent Pea\* is well ; I had a letter last post, which seemed to come from her cheerfulness of heart ; I am sure it gave much to mine. You say you are glad of news ; I wish I could send you some ; but Solomon, and your humble servant, who think vastly alike (I don't know whether you ever observed the resemblance,) are of opinion

\* A name given to her sister on account of their resemblance.



there is nothing new under the sun. A few marriages are talked of; first, Sir Thomas Robinson and Lady Caernarvon, and Felton Hervey and Mrs. Pitfield. I hope there is some truth in the first. Lady Caernarvon is very rich; I know nothing more of her indeed, and dare not ask after her qualifications, for fear of being thought to ask a question *mal-à-propos*. I cannot add much to the length of this, for I am going to preach elsewhere; the Dutchess and Mrs. Pendarvis are expecting me above to read a sermon, which, as unfashionable as it is, I have the courage to own amongst friends; but were it known in the beau monde, what would they say! I hope Mrs. Freind is well; make my compliments, or say what to another might be so, and truth and I will defend it to her; it supports me too in assuring you that I am always,

Sir,

your very sincere friend,  
and obliged humble servant,

ELIZ. ROBINSON.

*To Miss S. Robinson.*

*Bullstrode.*

MY DEAR SISTER,

A CRUEL, barbarous post-boy, robbed me of your letter for awhile, but at last, ashamed to detain so much happiness from me, restored it in the good company, of another of your's of later date. I know you are no friend to motion, but remember exercise is the means of health. My chief exercise is laughing; but whenever the weather permits I take a wholesome bleak walk round a terrace; if Master Boreas revels there too violently, I content myself with a lower situation. Mrs. Pendarvis and I walked out together this morning for about an hour, and happily beguiled the time by talking of our sisters, and the comfort of sisterly friendship. It would have tempted the envy of any one to whom fortune had denied such felicity, to have heard us. I look upon you so much as a part of

myself, that my affection for you is as self-love. I hope you will make a husband as happy as you have made a sister, and that in return, he will know your virtues as well, and reward them better, than I am able to do. Miss G—— is, by her precious brother, Lord W——, turned out of doors without a shilling; he is going to retrieve his estate, and this is his first act of economy! I cannot give you much account of our Buckinghamshire swains. I have seen none but a Mr. Mordaunt, Mr. Bateman, Lord Foley, the Bishop of St. Asaph, and Mr. St. Quintin, son to Sir William, but he is my own countryman. I have been at Windsor to see the Miss Granvilles, the late Lord Lansdown's daughters; and the Dutchess has promised to carry me to see the Castle. I assure you I sent the exact size of the marble table which is said to be worth a thousand pounds; it is beautiful as agate, of a prodigious thickness, and four feet broad. When I was last in town I passed great part of my time with Mrs. Freind. I found her surrounded by her husband's

relations, and had like to have made some unhappy jest upon a ghost in cherry colour, who, it seems, was a cousin. I was not so uneasy about that, because I could philosophically have proved that without flesh and blood there can be no kindred, and this poor creature had hardly any of either. Mr. B——'s wife too was there, and put out her strength to be witty, and in short showed such a brilliant genius, that I turned about and asked who it was that was so willing to be ingenious: for she had endeavoured to go off two or three times, but had unhappily flashed in the pan. The Dutchess desires her compliments to you. I am a perfect good Christian, and return good for evil; for if your letters awake me, mine will set you to sleep. So recommending you to your pillow, after this fatigue, I take my leave.

Adieu, my dearest sister,

E. ROBINSON.

*To the Same.**Bullstrode.*

MY DEAREST SISTER,

I OUGHT to ask many pardons for not having written to you by the last post; indeed the desire of employing my eyes in your service occasioned my extreme caution of them. They are now better, and my whole constitution is repairing, notwithstanding all that fear and chagrin have been doing against it. When they are overcome I shall enjoy the pleasures of Bullstrode with a happier mind; we have an agreeable family, and cheerfulness reigns in every heart but mine; but I have not yet reconciled myself to this inoculation. Last night being the birthday of the noble Admiral Vernon, we drank his health at noon, and celebrated the same with a ball at night. The Gun-fleet was danced in honour of him, and celebrated with extreme joy, and a splendid distribution of crowns to the fidler, who was not the son of Orpheus; but

however he made such a difference between tit for tat and a minuet, that one might understand which he meant. Mademoiselle Du Four had the honour of standing up instead of a flower pot, or an elbow chair, and she danced like the daughter of Herodias. I hear Mr. L—— and his deary are as happy as Lord and Lady ——. La vieille Princesse de l'Isle des Cousins will be as necessary for peace and mediations as Cardinal Fleury. I do not hear what is the impediment to their happiness, but I guess it is Othello's complaint. The world is mad, I think, "Such pains they take, to get a husband or a wife to hate." Content has too much sameness in it. Men and women will sell their birth-right for a mess of any porridge fortune can make them.

I am glad to find you are well and in good spirits, notwithstanding the melancholy change you have made from populous cities to unpeopled meadows. I would advise you to begin a course of natural philosophy, and get acquainted with your fellow-citizens, the grass-

hoppers. I assure you the Dutchess and I intend to become speculative, and read the Spectacle de la Nature, with a treatise on butterflies. As for the tawdry humar butterflies, they are not worth studying; for no microscope has yet been invented to discover their brains; and the object is too minute, I fear, ever to be rendered visible. I have the pleasure of seeing a beau here very often, and I cannot help wishing myself deaf whenever I am in his company; but now my judgment gives my fancy the lie, every time I begin to be pleased with him. All our senses are the avenues of pain as well as of pleasure, and I dare say Handel has suffered as much pain from an hum-strum, as ever he received delight from a violin or an harpsichord. Then, as to the nose, every thing in nature at some times has an ill savour, and a very small part of the creation smells sweet. To make a true estimate of the sweet and ill savours of vegetables, which are the sweetest things in nature, one need but take a walk through Covent-Garden, and one should

soon perceive the prevalence of cabbage stalks over the roses and jonquils. You will think, perhaps, after this, I have a desire to part with some of my senses ; but in my present situation I find them well entertained. Pray beg my papa to send me some of the flowers of your apron for the Dutchess. Adieu,

your's most affectionately,

E. ROBINSON.

*To the Same.*

*Bullstrode.*

MY DEAREST SISTER,

YOUR account of the ball gave me great pleasure. I am sorry Mrs. S——, to whom you are obliged for your diversion, should suffer for the part she took in it ; but assemblies and the grand climacteric do not agree together. The poms, but not the vanities of the world, may suit with age. Indolence with dignity, according to Lord Halifax's motto, may comport



with grey hairs, but the summer suit of lighty vanity, should be laid aside in the winter of age. In your letter you hurry Lady R——m about from place to place as if she was as portable as Mrs. W——d. Mr. Grenville, one of the Prince's court, dined with us to-day; he is a polite, agreeable, good-natured man; we went together to Mr. Waller's where he was to sleep to-night. He invited the Dutchess to come to see him, and to make a tour to Lord Cobham's, Oxford, &c. to which the Dutchess is well inclined. I suppose you had an account of a masque at Cliefden on the Princess Augusta's birth-day: The story of Alfred, by Thompson and Mallet. Mr. Grenville commends it, and says it will be published. I do not give much credit to his judgment, as I rather think he commends it as a patriot than as a critic. Bayes's stewed prunes, with other lenitives, might be administered to Thompson's genius, while astringents might be applied to Sir Philip Sydney's imagination. I am as fatigued with his hero's advan-

tures as if I had rode behind him. He out-Quixote's Quixote; knights, brave or miscreant, are unhorsed; ladies, fair or foul, chaste or wicked, fall in love with him: between the lance of Mars, and the arrow of Cupid, no age or sex escape him unhurt. Then the fair Princess bathing for the good of the public! I took great care no such accident should happen at Mary-le-bone. Lord Dupplin wrote a copy of verses on my going into the bath, which we impute to Sandys, to his great amazement. He says he does not know who wrote them, but thinks he is very sure he did not. Every one is in wrath at Sir John Norris's return. The Duke went to sea only to clear his stomach; he has been very sick, but is come home safe. I hope the next expedition will be in mackarel season, and then we shall take something. I hope the glorious Vernon will perform some great exploit alone. All the ladies in Suffolk give place to Mrs. Vernon, even those of the highest rank. I would have him made a peer ~~at~~ his return. Viscount Porto-Bello

would sound well. What a temptation did you resist, for my sake, in the charming conversation you mention ! I can make you no such sacrifice at present, but when Dr. Green is here, I will leave even puns for your sake ; friendships shall triumph over conundrums. When Dr. Young comes, whom I expect soon, I will not only hear, but I will write. I wish for his coming, as I hear he is very agreeable ; and indeed his private character is excellent. He sends his compliments to me when he writes to the Dutchess, and says he is perfectly well acquainted with me ; but that is the vision of a poet, for I never saw him in my life ; but he is so kind as to commend me and all my works in all places. If we cannot get panegy-rized by those who know us, we are glad of being praised by those who do not. My duty and love at home, from your most affectionate sister,

E. R.

*To the Same.**Bullstrode, 1741.*

MY DEAR SISTER,

THE sons of Apollo haunt this place much; the tuneful Green is gone, but the poetical Dr. Young is with us; I am much entertained with him; he is a very sensible man, has a lively imagination, and strikes out very pretty things in his conversation; and though he has satirized the worst of our sex, he honours the best of them extremely, and seems delighted with those who act and think reasonably. I believe he has satirized that composition of oddity, affectation, and folly, which is called a pretty sort of a woman. If any one wishes to assume that character, they have only to pervert their sense, distort their faces, disjoint their limbs, mince their phrases, and lisp their words, and the thing is done. Grimaces, trite sentences, affected civility, forced gaiety, and an imitation of good nature, ~~complete~~ complete the character. Your reproof

for my fear about my brother is very just, and I know not why I did not take the reasonable side of the question. Philosophy and prophecy come generally *après coup*. Reason determines our arguments, but passion governs our actions. What pity that sentences, systems, and definitions, should give way to cribbage ! but two Dutchesses command my presence. The Dutchess of Kent came here yesterday ; she is a very sensible and polite woman. Poor Dr. Young has got a terrible cold, to my great mortification ; for he is hoarse, and can hardly be heard. A wise man of three-score loses a great deal by being only seen.

Adieu, my dearest sister,

E. R.

*To the Same.*

*Bullstrode, 1741.*

DEAR SISTER,

IF you, who have none of the vices, faults, or follies Doctor Young lashes, are angry with him, how will the ill-natured, whose malice he has satirized, abuse him ! Pride and anger will rise in self-defence against him ; let but the virtues he has praised espouse him (and that is no more than justice), and you will find yourself his greatest friend. I have sent you Mr. Nugent's ode ; it is a very good composition for any poet ; but when I consider it as the performance of a beau, I am surprized. I did not think the quintessence of all the beaux in Christendom could have written it :

That Cato lived, that Tully spoke,  
That Brutus dealt the godlike stroke,

I thought the dear creatures did not  
know/ and for

The partial judge perverting laws,  
 The priest forsaking virtue's cause,  
 And senates slaves to gain,

they did not care, if the tailor and the peruke maker did but perform their duty. You know I always said there were some brilliant sparks of wit in Mr. Nugent's conversation, but, like Mr. Tinsel, he sometimes laughs to show his wit, and sometimes his teeth: I never suspected, till I saw this correct performance, that he was endued with so much judgment. We have a noble convocation of clergy here ; Dr. Young and the Dean of —— are very different characters, of different genius, and consequently often of different opinions in argument. We are entertained and instructed by their disputes, which are upon many grave subjects, particularly metaphysics and morality. Doctor Young maintains his superiority in all abstracted subjects, and is the man of speculation ; but to give a notion of the world, and to point the motives of action of the ambitious and busy part of mankind, the little

courtier excels. Dr. Young has only studied himself, and in himself has found wisdom, integrity, benevolence, and candour; but for intrigue and cabal he is utterly unacquainted with it. I think it is fortunate for Mr. M—— that you have given him a little respite from dancing in this hot weather: really you are a bad economist to waste lovers at that rate. Why! you would wear a thin man to the bone in a week, and a fat man would distil as if he were in an alembic; and let me tell you, a beau might make a sort of puppy dog water very good for the complexion. The Dutchess of Marlborough, and a few of the million of Trevors, were here yesterday, and to-morrow we are to have Mrs. Tatton and her daughters. Do not forget to tender my duty to my papa, mamma, and affection to my brothers.

Your affectionate sister,

E. R.



*To the Same.**Bullstrode, 1741.*

MY DEAR SISTER,

FOR the benefit of my constitution I starved myself in the north wind this morning till one, then for the good of my spiritualities, I attended chapel till half after one, and from that time till two, employed myself in the necessary decorations of my person. Then I was summoned to follow the call of nature and the dinner-bell to the dining-room, where having eat as if I were no goddess, though the poet laureat of Canterbury says *j'en vaux trois*, and having drunk, or rather, as celestials say, quaffed a glass of Madeira, my spirits were not elevated above the weight of ham and chickens till an hour after dinner, and then I proposed to write; but Doctor Young came in and entertained my mental faculties "with a feast of reason and a flow of soul," till six, and left me a

notion or two which I could not digest till tea came in: and whether the warm water relaxed the obstinacy of my former opinion or no, I cannot tell, but at last I understood all very clearly, and am come down to write just before the hour of cribbage, at which I have got great applause as a genius, and it being the first time I ever acquired fame in the way of cards, I am not willing to lose this new and considerable part of my character. I think I have sent you my journal, and cannot help thinking, now I am compared to Minerva, of Swift's verses, "Pallas grew vapourish and odd," for some of my employments are of the same importance as cutting paper: indeed, for me you should read blot paper rather than cut paper. I have not had a line from my brother Robert. I propose writing to Morris as soon as I think he will be in town; indeed, I have been very remiss of late, but I fancy you must be tired of having so many letters in the family. I must obey the high behests of the Dutchess; cribbage is the word;

believe me I would rather write to you than get the knave or twenty in crib ; in spite of fifteen two, fifteen four, and a pair six, my thoughts are with you.

E. ROBINSON.

*To the Same.*

*Bullstrode.*

MY DEAR SISTER,

I WAS ashamed, sorry, disappointed, and an hundred other things, that the remiss and lazy deserve to be, that I could not write to you last post. My inclination to write to you is well known ; so that I need not assure you the omission was not by choice. The truth was, my eyes not being well, I was reduced to have a blister on my back. Well may it bend to such a weight of calamity ! The punishments of sinful mortals generally fall on the rear. The ill-bred man is kicked, the pilfering soldier, the transgressing nymph, the idle vagabond,

all receive lashes on the back. We are now a small family in comparison of our usual number. The Duke, Mrs. Pendarvis, Lord George, and Mr. Green, are all gone to Town, the gentlemen for the birth-day, and do not return till Sunday. We are now quite a little party, but as cheerful as if we had a whole world to laugh with. Indeed we have it to laugh at, which is a safer amusement. Your description of the ball and supper is excellent. It was all *à la daube*. I am glad you went away before the scene of the shambles was opened. To be sure, our friend thought he was making a car-rion entertainment for my Lord Thanet's hounds. Thomas Diafoirus, who asked his mistress to see a dissection, did not offer a more absurd entertainment than this feast of mangled limbs. The Dutchess of Kent and Dr. Young, have long left us. You would like Dr. Young; he has nothing of the gall of satire in his conversation, but many pretty thoughts, and a particular regard for women when they are good. I have laid aside the

Arcadia till Mrs. Pendarvis comes, who is fond of it, and the Dutchess and I have agreed that she shall read it to us. I have been quite tired of the hero ever since I caught him napping. I believe I mentioned the famous mask of Alfred to you in my last; it is now published. In the first scene, I stumbled into a gulphy pool, and a trembling quagmire; it is a sublime piece of nonsense, with very few good things in it. I have not read it all, but I have made no impatient enquiries after it. I think the plot seems not unlike Gustavus Vasa, a hero in distress whose *je ne sçai quoi* heroical fashion, in taking a walk, or sitting down on a bank, betray an air of majesty that you know may be a compliment to our countrymen, to show how sagacious they are; or that, like lions, they can smell the blood royal; but no instinct of that sort, except Sir John Falstaff's, has ever pleased me. When I am pretty well, I go into a tub of cold water. My dreams are not like those of the Persian Monarch in the *Spectator*, or I would send you them. By a

violent hurry in my head I find I am not in my element, but ever desire to resemble Lord G——, who complains of being a goose out of water.

I am, my dear sister,  
your's most affectionately,  
ELIZ. ROBINSON.

*To the Same.*

*Bullstrode.*

MY DEAR SISTER,

I HAD no letter from the last post, for which I have blamed the post-boy, and every thing between this place and Horton. To-morrow I hope to have a letter from you, I had many in my sleep; for I dreamt of you all night, and was mortified in the morning to find myself a loser by being awakened. I have sent you the leaves, but fear they will not please you; I copied them as well as I could, and wish you had every day some commands for

me, that I might always have something to do which I should perform with pleasure. We expect Mr. and Mrs. West, and live in hopes of Dr. Young. He is now at Welwyn, sowing spiritual things in his parish. The sun will not shine on our microscope, which is a great vexation to the curious. Last night by the candle, I saw a fringe upon a leaf that would have done excellently well for your apron, and I dare say you would have made an admirable imitation of it. My brother Robert will soon be with you. I hope too to see him in town, for he will not be Duke and Dutchess enticed. Sunday se'nnight is the day fixed for our departure. Oh! then for operas and delight! Mr. Harley is come from London to-day, but has brought us no news; the town is full, but I do not hear of any gaieties going forward. Poor Mr. B—— takes his misfortunes so to heart, that I really pity him, but I have no balsam of heart's-ease for him. If he should die, I will have him buried in Westminster abbey, next to the woman who died with the prick of a

finger, for it is quite as extraordinary, and he shall have his figure languishing in wax, with “ Miss Robinson fecit,” written over his head. I really compassionate his sufferings, and pity him ; but though I am as compassionate, I am as cold as charity : he pours out his soul in lamentations to his friends, and all

But the nymph that should redress his wrong,  
Attend his passion, and reprove his song,

for the rhyme will have it so—ditty would have been better. I am glad he has such a stock of flesh to waste upon. Waller says that

Sleep from careful lovers flies,  
To bathe himself in Sacharissa’s eyes.

A less elegant poet might say, that flesh forsook my lover’s ribs, to cover mine ; I am really quite fat, and if there were not some hope that I might get lean again by raking in town, I should be uneasy at it. I am now the picture of Laugh and be fat, and begin to think myself a comely personage. Indeed, I wear well, and my



friends say I look better than ever. I have written to my brother Matt to-night, who is happy in the arms of Alma Mater, of whom he is a learned son. Mrs. Freind informs me the old doctor is in better health than for years past: one would think he had been boiled in Me-dea's kettle. Adieu ; supper is on table.

ELIZ. ROBINSON.

*To the Rev. Mr. Freind.*

*Bullstrode Nov. 15.*

SIR,

YOUR long expected, and at last despaired of letter, was sent to me here ; I could hardly believe my eyes when they endeavoured to persuade me the direction was written by your hand ; but the desire I had to find you was just, and that I was happy, made me give credit to their information. So far I have been civil enough ; but now expect to taste

a little of the bitterness of my wrath. Pray why did not you tell me in your letter if Mrs. Freind was well, where she was, what she was doing, and what she was thinking, (if there was any chance she might be thinking of me); are not these matters of importance in friendship? You sent me a scrap to tell me what I very well knew, that you ought to have wrote to me before, and you write it so short and lazily that it convinced me of what I was ready to suspect, that you had rather not have done it then. Then, say you, your time is taken up by your duty; let me tell you friendship is a duty, the chief branches of which are constant remembrance, kind letters, petits soins, and minute attentions. To give friendship the name of a duty would frighten many people from it, but I know it would everlastingly recommend it to you. Indeed, I think if you employ all your time in making sermons, you should send copies of them to your friends. Are we to be neither merry nor wise? Really I thought your letters would have made

me both, when the dreams of Pindus and the Aonian maids delight no more.—You can change your subject to things good, wise, and holy. As for me, who dwell in the medium between judgment and fancy, and so happily have escaped both, have I not, with an honest dullness, inserted many a moral observation in a parenthesis, to the heavy lengthening of an important piece of scandal, or a sentence about the weather? I have been an extraordinary correspondent to you. I am sure I always answered your letters before you even desired it, and never concluded an epistle till you was heartily tired of it; so that in the whole course of our correspondence I never disappointed you. But you tell me I write so excellently well that you do not deserve my letters. The modesty is rare; I never knew but one instance of the like, which was of a person in the rheumatism, who being told pain was a trial of their virtue, and as a means of being approved good, desirable, the patient answered with an humility as great as your's, that not be-

ing equal to the occasion they were unworthy of it. All this was spoken on both sides with great gravity, and I could not help remarking it; and it is the fresher in my memory as it has been the only instance, excepting the present, that I recollect, of a person's declining what they thought a benefit. I left Mount Morris the 13th of last month, and came to this place to my dear and amiable friend, whom I found as indulgent, good, and partial to me as I left her; for her friendship to me taking its rise from her goodness, and not my merit, I look upon it as unalterable, which I should not have the presumption to do if it had any other foundation than her generosity. You know she met, this summer, with an affliction of a very melancholy kind, under which she has behaved in a manner that increased my esteem for her, after I thought nothing could be added to it. Tenderness and piety towards the person she lost, and resignation to that power who took him hence, appeared in her behaviour with a lustre hypocrisy

cannot imitate, but virtue must admire. How amiable is that state of mind in which there is nothing of insensibility or impatience, which is as willing to suffer as apt to feel, and which submits to Providence in every thing ! Resignation and patience are virtues seldom to be found with the fortunate ; they are lessons learnt in the rude school of adversity. The indulgencies of fortune are apt to strengthen the will, make it imperious, and the temper froward. Unhappy state of mortality, that prosperity is as full of danger as adversity is of sufferance ? But the hazards of every fortune teach us this good lesson, that we, who can know nothing, should cheerfully submit to Him who knows all things. You will be glad to hear my counterpart in Kent is in good health ; we resemble each other in nothing more than a sincere regard for you and Mrs. Freind. You were frequently the subject of our conversation, especially, as my Pea will tell you, when with one heart and one mind, we walked in a grove, where none but the sweet

bird of night mixed in the conversation. Friendship, retirement, happiness, and harmony, all contributed to put us in mind of you. Could no humble sister turtles in your dove-house put you in mind of us? I had not suffered your neglect in silence, if I had either eyes or health, but I have been half blind, and half sick, most of the summer. Here Pea had an opportunity of shewing her tenderness, and indeed she did it in such a manner that without any stoical firmness, I could almost have maintained the principle that pain was no evil ; indeed, I fear to be better acquainted with her, for after almost twenty years society I find her every day more and more to be loved and valued ; and indeed I think our attachment to each other is too great. To punish the idolatry of the mind, I find ease is a sacrifice made to the engraven image in the heart. Friendship is very anxious, and the order of things mocks our anxiety ; I have just had an instance of it, my brother Robinson took a resolution this summer of being inocu-

lated ; great was my care while it was in prospect. Fear is a false medium, and magnifies the objects we see through it : it increased the danger perhaps a little, but still I was well pleased it should be done. In regard to me he would not be inoculated till I was safe at Bullstrode, the operation was then performed, but he continues in perfect health, and his physicians say he will not have the small-pox now. At this I am much disappointed, as he will again be liable to the danger of having it in the natural way, to which my reason is something averse, my prejudices much. I had answered your letter as soon as I received it, if my thoughts had not been entirely taken up about my brother ; now I am more composed. It has happened, it seems, but ill, but to whom does it seem so ? to the blind to fate, and truth. In what we call accidents of fortune, as well as the order of things, *whatever is, is right*. You see I write to you as if I thought you had still the regard for my happiness, and for all related to me, that you used to

profess in the days of our correspondence; for it would not be pardonable in me to say so much of myself, my sister, and my brother, if I did not suppose them to be persons for whom you had some affection. However, let it be as it will, you cannot wonder at me. All people love themselves, and many love their brothers and sisters; I am sure you, whom I take to be a connoisseur in friendship, will allow it is the most natural of any; the deepest impressions are made in youth, when the heart is not hardened by time and accidents, the affections not blunted by disappointment, nor the mind distracted by business; then we are tender and disinterested. Vanity fills not the space of our affections with the equipage of the world, nor does ambition employ our thoughts on its more serious trifles; our passions are calm and our lives serene. Then, before hypocrisy or pride, avarice, or ambition take us, is the time for friendship,

When souls each other draw,  
 And love is liberty, and nature law.



What you say is very true of the ungenerousness of flattering people, and then ridiculing them ; but flattery is ever preparing ridicule. Absurdity is the child of error, but chiefly of the mistaking ourselves ; and nothing, you know, does so mislead us as flattery : and as to obliging the world by civility, it is in vain to endeavour it ; as Solomon says, we must do well to ourselves, and the world will speak well of us. Popularity is the vainest of all the things that are done under the sun : I mean if proposed as the end of our actions. As for that praise which accompanies actions done for good and great purposes, it is musick to an honest ear, and the delight of the benevolent ; but I had rather be bound to whistle to the hydra than make it my business to be always speaking and doing things of courtesy to the grand monde. Have you seen Mr. Lyttelton's verses upon St. Agnes's shrine ? If you have not, I will send them to you ; I think they are extremely pretty, and quite poetical, and full of fancy. I wish you could see the

table I am writing at, it is adorned with four of the Dutchess of Portland's children; they are as beautiful, and what is not always the happiness of the beautiful, as innocent as angels. They are building card-houses, and I think at the grand Tower of Babel there was not a greater confusion of tongues. Even in this amusement I see the different bent of their tempers; one is careful of the foundation of the house, another is ambitious to have it high, though the fabric totters with its eminence; another is impatient to have it finished, and the fourth wants me to put something in it that it cannot hold. How harmless is this exercise of their little passions! yet here is something of ambition, covetousness, and impatience. Thanks to Providence, their fortune is so well laid, they do not build it upon king, queen, or knave. If I had the education of a child of large fortune, it should not, in its earliest infancy, play a trick with a court card. But, alas! it is too late that we taste the wormwood in those things. I will now release you,

it is high time, surely, especially as none but the parish of Witney are to hear the words of the preacher. I desire my best compliments to Mrs. Freind, and good wishes to my little cousin, and I hope the Doctor and his lady are well. Before I take my leave, I will tell you I am in good charity and peace with you, but you have taught me (as fortune does with her favours where she takes a fancy) to believe I deserve something; you did well to withdraw the support of that whim; but vanity has still a refuge; if I cannot please myself with thinking you are my friend, I will still value myself upon being with the the greatest sincerity and regard,

your's,

E. ROBINSON.

*To the Same.**Bullstrode, the 20th of Nov.*

SIR,

I HOPE this will find you happily placed by your fire-side at Bath, with my amiable cousin on your right hand, the Doctor, and Mrs. Freind, on your left, and the charming little boy chattering upon your knee. If it were not for considering you in this agreeable situation I should much repine at your absence; but when I reflect on the happiness of my friends I can forget my particular interests. However, not to carry compliment beyond truth, though we now lament your absence, it will be fully made up to us when the professor of rhetoric \* returns. Then we shall be comforted, pleased, improved, and delighted, and your worship *shall* be forgot. In the middle of dinner he shall often cry, *let us eat*, lest we should forget why we set round the table with plates before us,

\* Dr. Grey.

and imagine we are at cribbage. When this professor comes, jest and black pudding shall stand afar off, mixt conversation shall arise from Hudibras and the proverbs, ballads and the psalms of David: compliments shall abound, not of every one to their neighbours, but they shall seriously and sincerely apply the utmost powers and force of panegyrick to themselves. What a magnanimity there is in praising, oneself, when not one of one's hearers enters into the merit of the subject. Is it right for a good Protestant to leave infallibility uncontested to the Pope of Rome? It is impossible to live in such a state of indifference as not to love and admire some body, and who should it be but one's dear inseparable self? After all, how transporting are the pleasures of vanity! It is the mirror that reflects one's image back with more than original charms. Narcissus, indeed, fell in love with his person reflected by a silver stream, but then it seems the youth was handsome; but vanity is a complaisant representative, that asks no native beauty

in the object, but can render deformity itself agreeable to the self-beholder. Vanity acts the part of every kind of speculum; it lessens the defects, magnifies the beauty, and multiplies the merits. If the severe brow of wisdom repels thy airy phantoms, how welcome art thou still to the empty head and vacant heart, thou divine artificer of human happiness! Vanity is a moral mason, that of dirt and straw can build a palace wall; and from the worst materials raise the most superb architecture. Who would rob frail human nature of this great support? You, good Sir, and a few more whom reason guides in the ways of wisdom, may walk through the world without it; but in the pilgrimage of errors what is so good a guide? I see you are introducing it to me, when you would make me imagine you was received here on my recommendation. Far be it from me to reject so necessary a companion, and I will always have the candour, as well as gratitude, to recommend vanity to others, when it is that alone which recommends

me to myself. I have obeyed your commands by burning your letter, as you have promised another phoenix shall arise from its flames.

I am, dear Sir,  
your obedient humble servant,  
E. ROBINSON,

*To the Same.*

*Bullstrode,*

SIR,

THOUGH a word would have served for your justification, a postscript was not sufficient for my happiness, so you did very well to write me a whole letter. How glad I am to hear from Mrs. Freind and you, I cannot express; and if I could, I would not. Even the appearance of compliment and flattery ought to be avoided; for while those who feel little friendship express much, those who feel much must express less than they would,

and really fall short of truth for fear they should seemingly exceed it. While every vice is hid by hypocrisy, every virtue is suspected to be hypocrisy. This excuses the bad from imitating virtue, the ungenerous from rewarding it, and the suspicious from trusting it. Because credulity is a folly, suspicion is looked upon as wisdom, as if it was not as necessary a part of wisdom to know what to believe, as what to reject. Doubt should lead to enquiry, and enquiry to knowledge ; but our modern sceptics think fit to remain in uncertainty, rather proud to believe less, than to know more than other people. I have given hints in my letters to Pea, that I thought curiosity might sometimes be blameable, and now I find her letters are not read. But mine she is to read aloud, as far as she thinks fit. We write every post long letters ; it is the greatest comfort to absent friends to write much, but how much more agreeable it would be, if we could think to each others eyes, as we do, when present, to each others ears ? She indeed can write without any exami-



nation, but to ask questions of the dumb is an odd piece of work. I have been very sorry, and, what is less becoming, very angry that I could not answer your letter sooner, but many impediments have I met with ; my own silence was punishment, do not revenge it with yours.

You are very partial in your opinion of me, and I am obliged to you for your wishes ; what is so far above one's desert should be above one's desires. Alas ! the time is over, that the price of a virtuous woman is above rubies, and as for me, I have nothing but myself in the scale, and some few vanities that make me light. When few of our sex are grateful, will many of your's be generous ? It is playing at hazard with a benefit to bestow it, where you are not sure it will meet with a return. It is a sad sign of depravity of manners, that generosity is blamed, and gratitude wondered at, yet so it is in the commerce of the world. I hope I shall some time or another see you in your peaceful retirement at Witney. I fancy the Muses haunt it ; there is a poetical

turn in all your letters ; somewhere or another the nine ladies write a few lines. I am not enough acquainted with the inspired train to distinguish which of them puts the finishing touch. I am reading Sir Philip Sidney, but am ashamed to own I do not relish him ; not even the exceeding eloquence with which he describes the exceedingness of Philocleas' beauty, the exceedingness of which exceeded all other beauty ; for as much as the mind's excellence did, as it were, shine through the excellent beauty of her person, insomuch that no one could determine whether that the eye in beholding, or the ear in hearing, did more receive the sound, or objects of delight ; but together they wrought in the mind's eye a goodly admiration : so beautiful was her voice, and so harmonious her person, as did strangely divide the affections ; which after long doubting what to admire, at last consented to admire, without knowing what was admired, where every thing was admirable. Thus does Sir Philip, with expression of craftiness, or

rather craftiness of expression, so entirely puzzle my brain, and so overcome me with battles (for, like Bayes, he prefers that one quality of fighting to all others in a hero), that I cannot keep my attention for half an hour. I am surprized to see that a conjunction of wit and imagination have not been able to beget poetry ; but in rhyme he hardly exceeds the bellman. With a similitude of quality they work a contrary effect, for Sir Philip makes those sleep who wake, and the bellman makes those wake who sleep. I don't know whether I prefer prose or heavy morality in rhyme, but they are all *bout-rimés*, things rhymed not versified. My compliments to Mrs. Freind. Supper has been upon table this half hour.

I am, &c.

ELIZ. ROBINSON.

*To Mrs. Donnellan.*

*Bullstrode, January 1, 1742.*

DEAR MRS. DONNELLAN,

THOUGH there is no day of the year in which one does not wish all happiness to one's friends, this is the day in which the heart goes forth in particular vows and wishes for the welfare of those it loves. It is the birth of a new year, whose entrance we would salute, and hope auspicious: nor is this particular mark of time of little use; it teaches us to number our days, which a wise man thought an incitement to the well spending them; and indeed, did we consider how much the pleasure and profit of our lives depends upon an economy of our time, we should not waste it as we do, in idle repentance or reflection on the past, or a vain unuseful regard for the future. In our youth we defer being prudent till we are old, and look forward to a promise of wisdom as the portion of latter years:

when we are old we seek not to improve, and scarce employ ourselves; looking backward to our youth, as to the day of our diligence, and take a pride in laziness, saying we rest as after the accomplishment of our understandings; but we ought to ask for our daily merit as for our daily bread. The mind no more, than the body can be sustained by the food taken yesterday, or promised for to-morrow. Every day ought to be considered as a period apart: some virtue should be exercised, some knowledge improved, and the value of happiness well understood; some pleasure comprehended in it; some duty to ourselves or others must be infringed if any of these things are neglected. Many look upon the present day as only the day before to-morrow, and wear it out with a weary impatience of its length. I pity these people who are ever in pursuit, but never in possession; and I think their happiness must arrive as we date our promises to children, when two to-morrows come together. We are taught that there is a

prudence in neglecting the present time  
for the future, when, alas ! our fate  
deceives us, and we labour for others ;  
for, as says our poet,

He that to future times extends his cares,  
Deals in other men's affairs.

We ought so to enjoy the present as not  
to hurt the future. I would wish myself  
as little anxious as possible about the  
future, for the event of things generally  
mocks our foresight, and eludes our care,  
and shows us that vain is the labour of  
anxiety. The man was laughed at as a  
blunderer, who said in a public business,  
“ we do much for posterity, I would  
fain see them do something for us.” I  
have no notion of doing every thing for  
the future, while it does nothing for us.  
Shall I give fate to-day without knowing  
whether it will pay me with to-morrow ?  
The adventurers for hope are bankrupts  
of content : may the sun every day this  
year, when it rises, find you well with  
yourself, and at its setting leave you  
happy with your friends ! Let it be rather

the felicity of ease and pleasure than the extasy of mirth and joy! May your mind repose in virtue and truth, and never in indolence or negligence! That you already know much, is the best incitement to know more; if you study trifles you neglect two of the best things in the world, knowledge and your own understanding. I wish we were as much afraid of unbending the mind as we are of relaxing our nerves; I should as soon be afraid of stretching a glove till it was too strait, as of making the understanding and capacity narrow by extending it to things of a large comprehension; yet this is a common notion. I beg of you to reserve Monday morning for me, and I will spend it all with you; on Tuesday I set out for Mount Morris, and on Sunday night Pen desires you to be at her house. I hope to return to you in the beginning of March, for between two and three months; I wish we may contrive to be much together then, and will do my part towards it; I am the easier in this parting, as the meeting again is so

near at hand. Our happy society is just breaking up, but I will think of it with gratitude, and not with regret, and thank fate for the joyful hours she lent me, without blaming her for putting a stop to them. Her's is the distaff that spins the golden thread as well as the scissars that cut it. This year does not promise me such pleasure as the last has afforded me here, but the fairest gifts of fate come often unexpected. I hope this year will be happy to me, the last was much encumbered with fears and anxiety, and I had not much health in it, yet I was concerned at taking leave of it yesterday ; I had not for it the tenderness one feels for a friend, or the gratitude one has to a benefactor ; but I was reconciled to it as to an old acquaintance : it had not enriched nor (I fear) improved me, but it suffered me ; and admitted my friends ; I am sorry too when I am made to compute that I am tending towards a season of less gaiety, for there are few things worth being serious about. Follies that are our diversion when we



are young, are apt to be our trouble when we grow more prudent ; a fool too, which now we laugh at, we shall then detest, and those vices we meet abroad, that now in a pride of virtue we despise, we shall from observation of their ill effects sadly fear and hate ; our disposition will be changed from seeing to feeling vice and folly, from being spectators we shall become sufferers. You ask me how the desire of talking is to be cured ? I don't know the recipe, and you don't want it. The Dutchess thanks you for your letter, and will answer it by word of mouth. I am sorry you have been low-spirited, but I can never like you the less for it. Mutual friendships are built on mutual wants ; were you perfectly happy you would not want me ; but there is no being but the one perfect who is alone and without companion and equal. Imperfection wants and seeks assistance.

I am, dear Madam, &c.

E. ROBINSON.

*To Miss S. Robinson.**Bullstrode, 1741-2.*

MY DEAR SISTER,

THIS day did not begin with the auspicious appearance of a letter from you. I am glad it is not the first day of the year, for I might have been superstitious upon it. I wish it may be our lot to find in the next year what we wanted in the last. But, alas ! time steals the most precious pleasures from us ; our life is like a road where every show that has passed, leaves but a track that makes remembrance and reflection rugged. Where gay pleasures have swiftly passed, unsightly marks remain, and observation is much longer displeased than ever it was delighted. I am loth to part with an old year as with an old acquaintance ; not that I have to it the gratitude one feels to a benefactor, or the affection one bears to a friend. I have one particular obligation

to this year, as it has insured you from the danger of the small-pox, which, with a violent hand, takes at once what time steals more gently. This year, too, has allowed us many happy months together ; I hope the rest will do the same, else they will come unwelcome, and depart unregretted. I pity Miss Anstey for the loss of her agreeable cousin and incomparable lover. For my part, I would rather have a merry sinner for a lover than so serious a saint. I wish he had left her a good legacy. I must tell you the Dutchess drinks your health in particular every other day ; Lady Oxford dines with her one day, and I the other. You will be acquainted with her Grace next winter, and Mrs. Pendarvis, and the rest of her friends, whose company you will like very well. Mrs. Donnellan tells me she has a closet in Mr. Perceval's new house, which is to hold none but friends, and friends' friends. I fancy you will not dislike the society. Adieu, my dearest sister ; if I could dream of you it would induce me to keep my bed for a week

together, so I think it is better that I do not.

I am, &c. &c.

E. ROBINSON.

P. S. This day se'nnight I shall be with you, and the good family at Horton, telling a winter's tale by the fire-side. Oh! that we were all to meet there that once graced that fire-side, even the goodly nine, thanking my father and mother for all the life they imparted to us, and have since supported! I hope the flock is safe, and our meeting reserved for some of the golden days of fate. I wish you all a happy new year, that shall bring you much pleasure, and leave no repentance behind. May it increase your knowledge, without giving ye sighs of experience!

*To the Dutchess of Portland.**Sittingbourne, Tuesday.*

MADAM,

I HAVE left much of myself at Whitehall; I think I have some right to bring a few of your thoughts to Sittingbourne. I wish your Grace may not be as much tired with your journey as I am. I dare say Mr. Achard will tell you that by the size of my paper he imagines I have sent you a map of my travels; but I shall not enrich my description with the windings of the Thames and Medway, or the situation of Rochester. I shall be the heroine of my own story. I have generally observed that the writers of memoirs remember nothing but themselves; thus, being very important to myself, and insignificant to the rest of the world, I will proceed to write my own history, and talk of myself rather than not be spoken of. This morning I passed by Whitehall to ferry over the Thames. Think, if you can, who have never found any one so

worthy of regret, as the person I left, what I felt when I turned my back upon that place. I said, turning to my sister, "That is the gate." Then, when I passed by the door of Privy Garden, I pointed to it. These might seem trifles to standers by, but love gives a mighty dignity to small circumstances. I thought my tracing your footsteps, to be a little like Strephon and Claius, in Sir Philip Sidney, where they follow their shepherdess in their sorrowful remembrance till they come to the last adieu, and here love and grief grow very eloquent. I think it is one of the prettiest passages in the *Arcadia*. I will now say no more upon this subject, but lead your Grace to a more diverting part of my history. When I arrived at Northfleet (where we dined) every Phillis and Corydon were at a fair in the town, and to enter into the humours of the place, I walked through it. In one booth were nymphs and swains buying garters, with amorous posies; some only with the humble request, "when these you see, remember me;"

others with a poetical, and more familiar, "be true to me, as I'm to thee." Under another booth, for the pleasure of bold British youths, was Admiral Vernon, in gingerbread; indeed he appeared in many shapes there; and the curate of the parish carried him home in a brass tobacco stopper. I was a little concerned to see him lying in passive gingerbread upon a stall with Spanish nuts; but the politicians of our age are wonderful in reconciling the interests of nations. I assure you there was a great deal of company; many hearts did I see exchanged for fairings of cherry-coloured riband; and one Cymon, more polished than the rest, presented his damsel with a fan, with an intent, I presume, not to give "coolness to the matchless dame." I left the beau monde at the fair, and walked into the churchyard to read epitaphs (for which I would cite an example of right honourable authority); there was absurdity and sadness, jest and death, hand in hand. Some sought to lengthen out remembrance just a few years, by a frail monu-

ment of wood ; others, more able to purchase, though not more worthy of longer remembrance, have wrote their register when they were born and when they died, in marble. Many of the epitaphs were in verse ; but one monument raised my curiosity. It was a little triumphal arch of wood ; I suppose some mighty hero, at least a corporal, lies under it. I could not help crying out, Oh grave ! where is thy victory ? There was no writing to inform why this triumph over the invincible conqueror, Death, was erected, so I leave it to the conjecture of the ingenious. If the deceased had left such memoirs of their journey to their inn as I have done, who would have read their chronicle ? Some friend as partial as your Grace is to me. I presumed much upon that partiality when I sat down at nine o'clock, after a journey of above forty miles, to write to you. I have but just supped, and am very sleepy, having this morning waked the sun ; a very uncivil thing, you will say, when he is so good as to let me sleep generally many



hours after he is up. I beg my compliments to the Duke, particularly to his elbow, which, I hope, is well by this time.

I am,  
my dear Lady Dutchess's  
very grateful and affectionate  
FIDGET.

*To the Same.*

*Mount Morris, Friday, Jan. 1741-2.*

MY DEAR LADY DUTCHESS,

I HAD the pleasure of your letter yesterday. I was much rejoiced to hear your Grace had not found your cold so bad as it seemed to threaten; but, at the same time, I was concerned to think I had given you low spirits; for chearfulness is the best gift of health, and the happiest disposition of mind. Your delightful expressions of affection made me

extremely happy, and your arguments for my content are excellent. It will be my disgrace, as well as my unhappiness, if I do not profit by them ; indeed I think I can promise for myself that I will. I have not suffered at all from my journey, but got here without cold, well, and happy to find my friends so. My sister is extremely thin, which I am not pleased with : however, as she is well at present, it would be a reproach to me not to be happy too for the present : and for more we cannot answer, and would in vain enquire. To be anxious for the future is the malady of human nature,

*Facheux entendement, qui nous fait toujours craindre,  
Malheureux sentiment, qui nous fait toujours plaindre.*

The coldness of the weather will confine even the volatile spirit of your Grace to the fire-side. I am sure I would not go out in any vehicle but the chariot of the sun, nor make a visit to any creature but a salamander. If you go out I hope you will wrap up very warm. After the regular life you led at Bullstrode, and the select

company you had there, sure the court on twelfth night must appear a strange confusion and mixture. Many creatures that, as Dr. Donne says, Adam had been posed to name, such as seem scarcely made by the hand of nature, nor yet fashioned by art. In these crowds I have seen shapes that Prometheus would not have lighted at the expense of an ordinary brimstone match, yet they were animated with the spark divine. I have beheld beaux that seemed to be made for nothing but the tailor, or that companion of the tailor, which Mr. Achard magnifies from contempt to terror in his microscope; but the figures of human kind do not differ like their minds. One never sees a face with but one feature, though one finds sometimes an understanding with only one faculty. We seldom find a well proportioned mind. If there is a perfect symmetry of parts to be found in a mind, it is in faces, where there are but small features, delicate and not strong. Where nature acts with strength, a prevalence falls somewhere; where she is elegant about her work, she

may finish highly ; but to connoisseurs the rough sketch of a master is more pleasing than the laboured performance of a more ordinary genius ; and even the outlines, and rude draught of a noble capacity give pleasure. My letter is sent for, else I should crave pardon of your leisure and patience, and go on a little longer. Your Grace, as a true friend, will, like a true knight, be concerned for one of the same profession, and, I am sure, will wish to hear what is become of my brother's friend, about whom I told you he was much afflicted. We have heard nothing of him yet, so we imagine it goes ill : are not these things warnings to inoculate ? I desire your Grace to make my compliments to my Lord Duke. I hope I may wish Lord George joy of being a senator, and having a title to wear a wig of the first dignity. I am Mr. Achard's humble servant ; and the little ones, and your Grace's

affectionate, faithful,

E. ROBINSON.

*To the Same.**Mount Morris, Jan. 15th, 1741-2.*

MADAM,

IN your reasons for writing to me there was both judgment and mercy. For all the good things you do, no heart does better thank you than mine, and, let me tell your Grace, there is nothing belongs to me so good as my heart. As for being the guest of my head, and the chief image of my fancy, 'tis true you are so, but the place and the company there are unworthy of you; enthroned in my brain sits many a prejudice triumphant, much space entirely void, a desolate waste: some corners stuffed with lumber, and littered with unsorted matter; things by haste mishapen, by idle memory deformed, by ignorance darkened, or by error and folly strangely disguised; reason deposed by will, judgment manacled in the bonds of prejudice, reflection busied about trifles, fancy running wild, observation looking through false colours,

and confounding and mistaking objects, discretion sitting idle, because reason's comparative rule and balance are taken from her, and whim is doing all the business, while chance is sending her on a fool's errand. But my heart, I can boast, is fitter for your reception; it is filled with fair affections, love and gratitude wait on you, esteem holds you fast, regard will never part with you, tenderness watches you, fidelity, and every honest power, is ready to serve you, the passions are all under the gentle sway of friendship. Many guests my heart has not admitted, such as are there do it honour, and a long and intimate acquaintance has preceded their admittance: they were invited in by its best virtues, they passed through the examination of severity, nay even answered some questions of suspicion that enquired of their constancy, and sincerity, but now they are delivered over to the keeping of constant faith and love; for doubt never visits the friend entered, but only examines such as would come in, least the

way should be too common. There are many ways into my heart and but one out, which is to be forced but by outrageous injury, or breach of trust reposed. I am obliged to your Grace for your wishes of fair weather; sunshine gilds every object, but, alas! January is but cloudy weather. How few seasons boast many days of calm! April, which is the blooming youth of the year, is as famous for hasty showers as for gentle sunshine; May, June, and July, have too much heat and violence; the autumn withers the summer's gaiety, and in the winter the hopeful blossoms of spring, and fair fruits of summer are decayed, and storms and clouds arise; nature is out of humour at her loss, bewails her youth and strength worn out, and fairest seasons past; thus is it, too, with us. In our youth gentle expectation, and kind hope, like soft zephyrs fan our minds, but fear often waters our tender wishes with sad tears: in the maturer seasons of life passions grow strong and violent, though more constant; in the decline appears

melancholy decay ; softness and strength gone off, while dismal age brings despair of amendment, and makes the pleasure of youth and profit of the riper age forgotten ; unpleasant, unprofitable, uncomfortable, dark and dreary in itself, an enemy to every thing in nature, churlish and unkind, it casts no benevolent beams, but blows rude and biting blasts. Happy and worthy are those few whose youth is not impetuous nor their age sullen ; they indeed should be esteemed, and their happy influence courted. I am glad to see Lord George's frank upon the letter, a person must have a good deal of power to make any thing pass but by the road of gain in our world ; I am much obliged to his lordship for exhorting your Grace to write to me, and desire my thanks on that head, with congratulations on his new dignity ; may he grow in grace and wig daily, and an honourable and reverend cravat shall not be wanting. I have been very well since I came here, my face has acquired no new faults ; it has seen too many days to expect to be



mended by them, and were beauty immortal, frail vanity would not be so; and the first, without the latter, would not delight. I am glad however my face has not swelled with the frost, for I am so uneasy under objects of terror, that I would by no means be frightful, out of compassion to my friends: my countenance has never wounded any man, and heaven forbid it should make a lady miscarry! My sister and I are going out for air and exercise; how poor mortals labour to be healthy and happy! but health and happiness are fugitive things. I shall send my brother word he may have the books when Mr. Carter's executors want them. Poor Morris is in deep affliction, and indeed his friend deserved his utmost concern: he was with him in his last agonies; a grief his tender nature could hardly support. I believe though Mr. Carter was not of a gay disposition he was happy. If sense and virtue could make a person happy he was so, and if it cannot, what is this world? Virtue is all that is within our power, other circum-

stances of felicity are given alike to all ;  
 sure, therefore, equitable Heaven knows  
 that virtue alone outweighs them all :

If there's a power above us, as that there is  
 All nature cries aloud, he must delight in goodness,  
 And that which he delights in must be happy.

My brother is very unfortunate to have the first years of his life thus darkened by misfortune ; he has health and a cheerful nature to carry him through, but my heart bleeds for him. I am provoked and grieved in spirit, to hear some people wonder at his taking the trouble to go up to town to take care of a person who was not related to him, and they express great surprise at his being afflicted : I assure you it is the sentiment of the great city of Canterbury, though many there would have gone twice as far to have saved a vole at quadrille. My brother Robinson was in town but a few hours, and meeting with the ill news of a friend's death, and finding his brother in affliction, I imagine he was scarce able to wait upon your Grace, nor do I sup-

pose he had any dress unpacked that was proper to make his appearance in at Whitehall. I am glad you go into public places so as to keep yourself diverted : dissipation is the best thing for the health and spirits ; and I am at present too ready to judge this world does not deserve our collected thoughts ; there is so much misery and disappointment, it is not well to reflect and examine too deeply. The scenes of the world are gay, and the show delights our imagination, but the drama will hardly bear the criticisms of reason ; fools and knaves are the principal actors, and many a villainous plot, and sad catastrophe one beholds upon the stage of life ; it is best to look on with an equal mind,

Hurt, can we laugh ; and honest, need we cry ?

It is wisest to neglect all follies, and forgive all vices but our own. I hear Dr. Clarke is going to be made a Bishop, and I hope the news is true, for, with reverence be it spoken, I am of opinion even the venerable bench wants a supply of

charity and wit, and in both he abounds ; may his spirit animate the clay (and dough) of some of his mitred brethren, with whose mitres are entwined the nodding poppy rather than the laurels that adorn the learned head. I have wrote your Grace an unreasonably long letter, but I cannot release you till I have desired my compliments to my Lord Duke and Mr. Achard ; a thousand kisses to the little angels ; twenty of which are to the Marquis's chin, and twenty more to the silver curls in Lady Margaret's neck. To Mrs. Donnellan, Mrs. Pendarvis, Dash, and Mrs. Dewes, my kind remembrance ; to all that remember me my friendly recollection ; to such as forget me my hearty forgiveness and entire oblivion ; so being in affection with my friends, and charity with my enemies, and easy indifference about the bulk of the world, I will look after my future provision. I am now going to read Dr. Gastrel's book. If Mrs. Pen does not send me the world she promised me, I will weep in the style of Alexander the

Great, not indeed, as that madman did, for a world to quarrel with, but for one to agree with. I want the kingdom of the just, such a long and pacific reign would suit me mightily, but this rapid world I like not much. Time, and the wheel of Fortune, run too fast for my speed; but in a thousand years I should have leisure for every thing. My brother Tom is reading to me, my sister is pulling me by the sleeve, all are favouring my meditations. I like your account of Lord S——; your Grace has as complaisant a way of calling a person dull as ever I knew; I dare say his lordship did not stare at you. All your obliged humble servants here beg their compliments, my sister in particular.

I am, Madam,  
 your Grace's most obedient, most  
 obliged, and ever grateful,

ELIZ. ROBINSON.

P. S. The direction Mrs. Pendarvis is to have for the book, is—to be left for me at Mrs. Pembroke's, grocer, without St.

George's gate, Canterbury. I have been blooded according to Dr. Mead's order ; I am sure he takes me for a termagant, and is desirous of bringing my spirit under, but great souls are invincible, and you see by my affections and aversions he has not reduced me to apathy ; if he should, he would be a loser by it, for I have him in high regard and esteem.

*To the Rev. Dr. Shaw, F.R.S. &c. &c.\**

REV. SIR,

You will perhaps think me rather too hasty in my congratulations if I wish you joy of being going to be married, whereas it is generally usual to stay till people really are so, before we offer to make our compliments. But joy is a very transi-

\* This anonymous letter was written by Miss Robinson, and sent to Dr. Shaw, the traveller, at the instigation, and for the amusement, of the Dutchess of Portland and her society.

tory thing ; therefore I am willing to seize on the first occasion ; and as I imagine you are glad you are going to be married, I wish you joy of that gladness ; for whether you will be glad after you are married, is more than mortal wight can determine ; and having prepared myself to rejoice with you, I should be loth to defer writing till, perhaps, you were become sorrowful ; I must therefore in prudence prevent your espousals. I would not have you imagine I shall treat matrimony in a ludicrous manner ; it is impossible for a man who, alas ! has had two wives, to look upon it as a jest, or think it a light thing ; indeed it has several advantages over a single life. You that have made many voyages, know that a tempest is better than a dead calm ; and matrimony teaches many excellent lessons, particularly patience and submission, and brings with it all the advantages of reproof, and the great profit of remonstrances. These indeed are only temporal benefits ; but besides, any wife will save you from purgatory, and a diligent one

will secure heaven to you. If you would atone for your sins, and do a work meet for repentance, *marry*. Some people wonder how Cupid has been able to wound a person of your prowess ; you, who wept not with the crocodile, listened not to the Sirens, stared the basilisk in the face, whistled to the rattlesnake, went to the masquerade with Proteus, danced the hays with Scylla and Charybdis, taught the dog of the Nile to fetch and carry, walked cheek by jowl with a lion, made an intimacy with a tiger, wrestled with a bear, and, in short, have lived like an owl in the desert or a pelican in the wilderness ; after defying monsters so furious and fell, that you should be overcome by an arrow out of a little urchin's quiver, is amazing ! Have you not beheld the mummies of the beauteous Cicopatra, and of the fair consorts of the Ptolemies, without one amorous sigh ! And now to fall a victim to a mere modern human widow, is most unworthy of you ! What qualities has a woman that you have not vanquished ! Her tears are not more apt to betray than



those of the crocodile, she is hardly as deceitful as the Siren, less deadly, I believe, than the basilisk or rattlesnake, scarce as changeable as Proteus, nor more dangerous than Scylla and Charybdis, as docile and faithful as the dog of the Nile, sociable as the lion, and mild, sure, as the tiger ! As her qualities are not more deadly than those of the animals you have despised, what is it that has conquered you ? Can it be her beauty ? Is she as handsome as the empress of the woods ? as well accommodated as the many-chambered sailor ? or as skilful as the nautilus ? You will find many a creature by earth, air, and water, that is more beautiful than a woman ; but indeed she is composed of all elements, and

Fire, water, woman, are man's ruin,  
And great's thy danger, Thomas Bruin.

But you will tell me she has all the beauties in nature united in her person, as ivory in her forehead, diamonds in her eyes, &c.

But where's the sense, direct or moral,  
That teeth are pearl, or lips are coral ?

If she is a dowdy, what can you do with her? If she is a beauty, what will she do for you? A man of your profession might know the lilies of the field toil not, neither do they spin; if she is rich she won't buy you, if she is poor I don't see why she should borrow you. But, I fear, I am advising in vain, while your heart, like a fritter, is frying in fat in Cupid's flames. How frail and weak is flesh ! else sure, so much might have kept in one little heart ; had Cupid struck the lean, or the melancholy, I had not lamented ; but true Jack Falstaff, kind Jack Falstaff, merry Jack Falstaff, *fat Jack* Falstaff, beware the foul fiend, they call it marriage, beware on't ! As what I have advanced on the subject of matrimony is absolutely unanswerable, I need not tell you where to direct a letter for me, nor will I, in my pride, declare who I am that give you this excellent counsel ; but, that you may not despair of knowing where to address your thanks for

such an extraordinary favour, I will promise, that before you find a courtier without deceit, a patriot without spleen, a lawyer without quibble, a philosopher without pride, a wit without vanity, a fool without presumption, or any man without conceit, you shall find the true name of

your well wisher,  
and faithful counsellor,

*To the Dutchess of Portland.\**

MADAM,

IF your Grace designed to employ me so that I should not trouble you with my letters, you did well to set me to take care of a future state, and to look after

\* This letter is too prolix, and is inserted rather as a contrast to the lively girlish letters, than as exhibiting her deliberate sentiments. She makes trial of her wings for future more steady flights.

another world, for here I have so little to do in my present position, I should have abundant leisure to be impertinent. I have been endeavouring to confine my wishes to the little circle of my fire-side, and my care and employments are not further extended ; I have a few books on my left hand, and a pen and ink on my right, and a work bag, which I seldom molest, before me ; leisure I have abused to idleness, and ease to downright laziness ; I avoid business, seek not wisdom, but cherish mirth : as for time, I troubled myself only about that small part of it my clock gave me an account of ; other worlds my capacity had straitened as much as a gentleman of our acquaintance, who would have put a constellation, like the dust of a sun-flower, into your microscope ; and for my divine spirit, I thought, like the innocent girl in the Tempest, it was only blue smoke that appeared at my mouth in a cold morning to tell me the day was frosty ; but your Grace, whose words enlarge every mind into which they enter, has set me on a

more noble employment. According to your commands I read the Moral Proof of the Certainty of a future State.\* I like the book very well, but, my dear Lady Dutchess, the terms on which you lent it to me were hard, viz. that I should give my opinion of it; now I have scarce knowledge enough to have any opinion at all, little ground to trust to it, and as little courage to mention it; the writer was a wise man and a Bishop, one that knew more of this world, was drawn nearer to another, had improved his mind and examined it; I, a simple reader, a young and ignorant damsel, God wot, in whom to examine, is impertinence, to judge, arrogance; but I think you are well enough acquainted with the powers of the mind to know we cannot suspend judging, nor implicitly believe. Had Providence subjected us to either of those things, we should either never have done any thing, or have been as liable to be led by bad example and precept as by good, for it is the business of discretion

\* By Dr. Gastrell, Bishop of Chester.

and judgment to inform us of the difference: therefore, opinion is the right of the most simple and weak, and only as the general right of a rational being do I assert it.

I cannot say I think his arguments to make out his first proposition are so good as many I have heard for a future state; the first proposition, I suppose you remember, is, that the true end of man, and the only reason of human life assignable, is to serve God here, in order to be happy in his favour hereafter; the truth of this, he says, is to be shewn by a positive direct proof taken from the nature of man, and the circumstances of his condition in this world; our Bishop says (upon what intimate knowledge of the great Creator's will I know not) that but for another life there is no reason at all for man's existing; this is a manner of speaking which I own hurts me; it seems an arrogant and ungrateful acceptance of that being which infinite, wisdom bounty, and mercy, has imparted to us. Is the contrivance and disposition of such a

Creator, whose fulness of perfection moves him to act, and who is necessarily wise and merciful, to be called in question in any thing? Sells he his bounty like niggard man, who never pays till after the labour and pains of his slave have earned them? But alas! we, who are the favourite creatures of high Providence, like the minions of an earthly prince, grow proud and insolent by favour. Because the infinite Goodness has promised us a world of unmixed and uninterrupted felicity, we spurn at this, and groan under every oppression; the hope of a future state was designed to be our happiness even here, but we make it the cause of our impatience. It has been answerable to the nature of God to make many worlds, and give life to many creatures; we see the gradation rising into man by the eyes of sense; the eyes of faith and reason see it rising from us to infinite. Mr. Pope says, "in the order of Providence there must be somewhere such a being as man;" and indeed is it not judging more adequately of God,

who is ever wise and good, and as an inspired writer says, whose tender mercies are over all his works, to think man rightly placed in regard to this world, though his chief end be for another, than to suppose Providence is to be justified therein only at his entrance into another state? And also I think if we are here for nothing at all but for another life, the whole order in the world is vain, the animal creation vain, and much of the design and work of Providence is called in question. Our author says, that but for a future state not only many virtues would be overthrown, but many of our sins would be more extravagant than they now appear; I wish he had told us what sins were to be of service to us in another life. Our desire of living on, and still continuing our being, shows the double wisdom of Providence, which he does not comprehend, viz. our use in this world, as well as the place provided for us in another. It is the first law of nature and of God, that we do not abandon our post here till his gracious will has worked its



pleasure by our means. Then his other argument, that but for another life we should not endeavour to be wise or great, I think there is not much in it; for as to the use the knowledge we attain will be of hereafter, I doubt whether it is by many believed that they shall maintain that superiority over immortal spirits which they have gained by their learning over their fellow-creatures; and as to the pleasure in greatness, and the utmost grasp of mighty ambition, being to reflect thereupon in our immortal state, fewer still can be so vain as to think it any thing. Then, as to the desire of fame proceeding from a belief founded in the nature of immortality, it is weak enough. Shall the spirits of men made perfect delight in the fame of a conqueror or a poet, the first founded in wickedness and oppression, and the second in vanity and jest? Was the fame and greatness sought by an Alexander, a Cromwell, and coveted by a Caligula, suggested by this? The desire of fame is implanted in us by that wisdom which

has provided all things for our advantage ; it stimulates mankind to great actions, and the unbounded designs of pride, covetousness, and ambition, do not seem to me (as is his opinion) the efforts of a great immortal spirit so much as contrived for the general end of society. The satisfaction the miser denies himself is given with advantage to his heir, on whom as much prodigal expense and wanton luxury is lavished as on the other was exercised penurious penance ; the labours of one generation make the ease of another. That man is in the general less happy than beasts I cannot imagine ; consider in what a delightful point of view he is in regard to the rest of the creation ; all the book of nature open to him, and he alone has a mind to understand it all ; to him it is given to see the working hand of Providence, how it has fashioned all the curious workmanship of matter, and the excellence and perfection of every living creature, the fixed and incomparable laws of the universe, and from this to adore the first good, first

perfect, and first fair. But I see I must not go on at this rate, for I shall lengthen my letter to a shameful size, therefore, to leave particular objections, I will only say, I think this way of despising all that is best in this world, is ungrateful to him by whom we were placed in it for a time. Rather let us build us a tabernacle of content in this wilderness, and say it is good for us to be here while it is the pleasure of the Almighty. If we make it a maxim that there is nothing of happiness to be enjoyed in our present state, the greatest virtues mortality can reach will perish. What patriot would labour for his country, did he look upon it as a dungeon of misery? What sage would instruct his countrymen if he thought folly preferable to wisdom? What parent would bring up their child, if they thought life a curse? The murderer would be the only benevolent man; none would arise to defend the laws, the lives, the liberties, the properties of their fellow-citizens; those people who least acknowledge the benefits of their state

seem to me least to endeavour to improve it by the satisfaction that arises from virtuous actions; despair teaches inaction, but hope is the spur of diligence; if we believe there is happiness in virtue, and that her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace, we shall endeavour to make a progress in this road which alone can bring us to the abiding of content. To speak only of moral proofs of a future state many there are that appear entirely convincing, and it seems a notion wrote by the very finger of God upon the minds of men, and I think they must be very unhappy who cannot rely upon it; there is something so terrible to nature in the thoughts of annihilation and entire oblivion, that nothing but stupidity can endure it without anguish: the unequal distribution of the things of this world is the greatest proof that can be that there is another where the difference will be made up, where the wicked man shall not triumph over him that is more righteous; of this too we may be sure, that though we can-

not by searching find out the Almighty, to perfection, yet he must ever act towards us with infinite wisdom, goodness, justice, and mercy ; and if increase of knowledge oftentimes gives us a new view of sorrow, faith opens to us everlasting scenes of felicity. There are many good things in this book, but the compass of a letter would not take them in ; the mind assents to truth immediately ; and I wish, in affairs of this nature, where the good and happiness of mankind are concerned, nothing was introduced because it wears the charm of novelty, or the disguise of plausibility. On this subject there are truths that would swell folios, therefore it is but a vanity to introduce any thing else. I think this world may afford to some a pleasant journey, to many it is indeed a sore travail ; but those in happiness ought to be ready to commit themselves to the disposal of Providence for another world, the riches of whose grace they have tasted in this ; such as are heavy laden with misery may rejoice to be freed from it, and to expect from

justice, and mercy eternal and never failing, the reward it must certainly bestow on suffering virtue. But let us not, because God, in the fulness of his grace, and riches of his mercy, has promised us a better world, despise this, which too is his gift, from whom every good and perfect gift cometh. Impatience makes every accident a harm; all evils but the loss of friends and health may be borne; grief is not easy to be conquered and terrible to be endured; but separation is not so grievous to those who have the hopes of meeting their friends again in a glorious immortality, not parted long and then to part no more. No human wisdom can be such a support in misfortune as the reliance of faith; the rules of philosophy are rather a denial of human passions to be what they are, and must be, than any possible and practicable method of restraining them. Content, I fear, is oftener by accident than art; something of the disposition, chiefly assisted indeed by our endeavours. Our nature may be restrained, but never can be subdued,

neither by the power of strength, nor bias of custom; a person may be wise according to the wisdom of men, and yet be neither good nor happy. Would we enquire the way to felicity and perfection, and ask of the learned the way, the learned are blind. Oh man! why exaltest thou thyself? Then down with all but,

The sacred volumes, down ;  
Only reserve the sacred one :  
Low, reverently low,  
Make thy stubborn knowledge bow.

My dearest friend, excuse this long letter; burn it, or hide it, for I would not have any mortal man see it upon any account. I beg your Grace not to show it to any of that lofty race so proud of opinion and superior sense; I think I hear Monsieur du Poivre saying, Does she think your Grace has nothing to do but to read her letters? Must not you go to court, and to the opera, and to the play? Pho!

My mamma had the honour of your

letter ; would you think I was so covetous, I could not help wishing the ink had been all spent upon me ; and the letter was so finely wrote that I think my mamma must have a writing master to teach her half a year before she can answer it. We are now a small family ; of all the olive branches only my sister and myself. I intend to write to Dash and Pen, but, what have I to say, who am myself what erst I made a jest of, like an owl in the desert, and a pelican in the wilderness ?

I am, dear Madam,  
your Grace's most grateful, and faithful,  
E. ROBINSON.

*To the Same.*

*January the 27th, 1741-2.*

If the world be worth thy winning,  
Think, oh think it worth enjoying.

WHY does your Grace complain of the  
embarrassment of that world your merit



draws about you? I may indeed complain that the happy have whole hours of your company while I can scarce get a moment of it. Pray do not compliment my head; such as it is, it is at your service. It is not a head of great capacity, but a great part of the space is unfurnished. I only beg, if you furnish it, it may be with a little more order than your closet; for with heads as with drawers, too full, one can never find any thing when one looks for it. A head made up with the variety of your closet must be excellent for making dictionaries, writing grammars for all the languages spoken at Babel, or a natural history of the creatures in Noah's ark, or for drawing plans of the labyrinths of Dedalus. What a cunning confusion, and vast variety, and surprising universality, must the head possess that is but worthy to make an inventory of the things in that closet! So many things there made by art and nature, so many stranger still, and very curious, hit off by chance and casualty. Shells so big and so little, some things so antique, and some

so new fashioned, some excellent for being of much use, others so exquisite for being of no use at all; accidental shapes that seem formed on purpose; contrivances of art that appear as if done by accident. But how should I describe it? All the Muses, grave and merry, all the Graces gay and elegant, could not sing its worth, its use, its pleasure, and its ornaments. Oh! the windows so full that they let in no light; the tables so heaped one can lay nothing down; and the chairs so loaded, no body can sit upon them. The great abundance that furnishes nothing, and the variety where nought is distinguished! But I offend the mighty Pallas who says it is her temple, and will not suffer me to laugh at it, and you know how I fear to be a spinster for life; so for fear of her revenge, I will say no more of this pantheon of arts. My love waits on the fair and gentle Dash. I will trouble her with a letter as soon as the fog is gone; but invention is now so low that all honest folks are dull, in which

hear from you take a happy date from the very hour the letter comes. Those things that before were objects of indifference, by the pleasant disposition of my mind become agreeable. I am ashamed that I uttered some complaints of your silence; but think, when we are touched in the tenderest part, how sorely we complain! I am so unreasonable that I expect your love, your remembrance, your thoughts. Love is very covetous, and I fear I am of a selfish temper, for of the affection of my friends I am very tenacious; if I am not so of other things it is indifference, and not generosity, that I do not see happiness in them, rather than that I slight them from philosophy. The sea of politics runs high; first rates, frigates, barges, oars, and scullers, all running with the stream. We have had all the various reports of rumour conveyed to us by Fame's light horse, the post; and I find hopes and fears fly about extremely. May chastisement mend those that are chastised, and power enlarge the hearts of such as are ad-

vanced ! so shall I say amen to all the will of Fortune ; but if she fills her house with spirits more unclean than the former, I value the topmost niche in her wheel, less than the lowest spoke in a wheelbarrow. I am glad things go on so quietly ; I have but just courage enough to serve me in time of peace ; and for riots, seditions, wars, and rumours of wars, they sore affright me. I think one man has acted a wise part, but who acts wisely is not therefore wise, says Mr. Pope, in general, and it may be perhaps wonderfully applicable to this particular case. However, if this head wants wisdom, it has that ornament which many prefer to it, even that which ambition and pride will stoop to, justice bend to, wisdom submit to, and religion worship with an idolatrous adoration ; it is a circle that bewitches the mind of man : yet the wisest preacher, some thousand years ago, said, a wise child whose head was bound by a homely biggin was better, but the preachers of now-a-days say otherwise. I am glad Sir Robert gets off safe ; foe to

his pride, but friend to his distress, I wish he may neither do nor suffer harm. Mr. Pelham's advancement, I believe, is as happy for the public as for himself. There are many honourable men named of all sides to be put in ; I do not hear that many are ready to go out. As for the two your Grace mentioned, if a purification be intended I fear it will be necessary they should be done away. I hear Mr. Pulteney will not take a place, which is a noble piece of integrity ; but I hope he will not be inflexible, for power is well lodged in those hands that take it as a sceptre of mercy rather than as a rod of rule ; and if a person does not value places, they are the fitter to be trusted with them, since they will not then hold them on bad terms. I imagine the study of physiognomy must be very entertaining at present. One might see hope sitting in a dimple, fear skulking in a frown, haughtiness sitting on the triumphal arch of an eye-brow, and shame lurking under the eye-lids ; then in wise bystanders we might see conjecture draw-

ing the eye-brows together, or amazement lifting them up. A man in place bringing his flexible countenance to the taste of the present times, smiling about the mouth as if he was pleased with the change, but wearing a little gloom on the forehead that betrays his fear of losing by it. Men that never were of any consequence wrapping themselves up in the mystery of politics, and seeming significant; as if, when times alter, they had a right to expect to be wise. Then the vacant smiling countenances, of those civil people, that would intimate they would do any thing for any body. The asses that, in lions' skins, have brayed for their party, throwing off their fierceness, and appearing in their proper shape of patient folly, that will carry a heavy burden through dirty roads. Then the state swallows, that have ever lived in the sunshine of favour, withdrawing from the declining season of power. Then the thermometers, weathercocks, and dials of the state, will scarce know what to say, how to turn, or which way to point.

They who have changed their coat with every blast, what must they do till they know which way the wind blows? Unhappy ignorance, that knows not if preferment comes from the east, or from the west, or yet from the south ! Then what will those noble patriots do, whose honesty consists in being always angry, now they know not whom to be angry with? These occurrences give one too great an insight into mankind, for one receives bad impressions of them by seeing them in these hurries ; while, for haste, they leave the cloak of hypocrisy behind, and shew the patched, stained, and motley habit of their minds. There is a danger in seeing others are wicked ; it seems to dissolve the covenant of faith, and slackens good will. But when we observe how little peace attends even the success of wickedness, that power cannot purchase friends, nor pomp acquire esteem, nor greatness procure honour, but that the end is contempt where the means are base, it must sure abate the appetite to ill. Power and pomp are of no use but

to make servants and admirers, and could reason but persuade people that if ill acquired they gain false friends and real enemies, feigned flattery and concealed contempt, not more gazers than censurers, not more noise than ill fame, few would endeavour to obtain a painful and hateful pre-eminence. But flattery, “parent of wicked, bane of honest deeds,” represents to the great that every servile cringe is zealous adoration, and every self-interested follower a sincere friend. What a deal of pains do some people take to make knaves envy, and fools admire, though they would be ashamed to own they valued the opinions of such people. Strange that the proudest should court the opinions of the most contemptible ! I am sure your Grace thinks I am not capable of envy, or you would not have made me liable to the sin, by saying you had so much company that I covet, and that they had your company, which most of all things I covet. I would fain have been any one of you to have been happy with the rest. We are quite alone



here ; I am not sorry for it, for I do not like, as some good folks do, every creature that walks on two legs, with a face to look up to heaven or down on the earth, and yet understands neither ; an animal that has missed of instinct, and not lit upon reason ; one that thinks by prejudice, speaks by rote, and lives by custom ; that dares do no good without an example, but dares do evil by precedent, whose conversation is composed of more remnants than a tailor's waistcoat, who snips off every man's superfluous observations to the patching of one sentence ; an inconsistency of thought that makes monstrous opinions, and an absurdity of memory that has laid up every fool's proverb as an infallible maxim ; one that thinks every thing wise his grandfather did, and every thing foolish that his juniors do ; who will not learn, and cannot teach ; who, if he does wrong or right, acts from some prejudice he got when he was a boy ; so one can neither blame, nor praise, nor love, nor hate, nor laugh, nor cry for him, or any thing he does.

I had rather have the dead palsey than such a companion. Any impertinent lively creature is better than these gentry. I am sleepy with thinking of them ; the horrid family of the Gorgons would be as welcome to me. I shall be very glad to hear the Duke and Lady Fanny are well. Adieu, my dear Lady Dutchess ; believe, that as long as I exist, I ever shall be with the tenderest, sincerest, most grateful, and constant affection,

Your's,

E. R.

*To the Same.*

*Mount Morris, March 3, 1742.*

MADAM,

IF I had been ill when your Grace's letter came it would have cured me. I am infinitely obliged to you for your kind concern, but am sorry I awakened it by my remissness ; my head had been aching

very much for three days, that really I was unfit for any thing but an easy chair in the chimney corner. I was afraid of imparting my thoughts lest they should give you the head-ach or the cramp, but now I am quite well, and live in the hopes of seeing the light of your countenance very soon; when a few hours have run their stages they will bring me to you; but wishes have swifter wings than time, for they bring me to you every instant. An honest fisherman, in a play, says the greatest evils of his life are hunger, thirst, and hope. I think I have not met with a better philosopher; hunger is a great evil to the poor, but it has its remedy; thirst too has its allay; but hope, the hunger of the learned, and thirst of the rich, has no cure, no, nor no abatement. Hope is a vagrant that prefers begging from place to place, and gathering morsels to living at home on fair means with content; it is a vagabond without an honest calling or an abiding place; it cheats us of the present good, and makes beggars of those fortune has

made princes; what have we, who are here but for to-day, to do with the eternal promises for to-morrow? Get thee gone from me, thou restless guest, that cannot live with content upon possession! leave me content for my companion, and I will not ask thee to come as a flatterer; take fear along with thee, as fanciful a creature as thyself, who destroys what is real with a more painful deceit than thou buildest what is but imaginary; each are equally enemies to content. I have more compassion for those who fear to be miserable, than for such as are impatient to be happy; examples of misery are to be met with, but of absolute happiness none; such as have overcome those intruders of quiet, hope, and fear, are the nearest to happiness; they have reached content. I have spent some anxious hours since I parted with your Grace in fear, sometimes of not seeing you again for a twelve month, which gave me a heavy depression of heart; at other times, in a nearer hope of seeing you, I was in an impertinent elevation of spirits. Now,

had expectation stood still and quiet, swift-footed time had brought the hour of our meeting. Oh that the soul could stay at home and mind its present business, and not go forth in fearful or fanciful prophecies concerning unknown matters ! The folly of anticipation ! Does not time fly fast enough, that our wishes must outrun it ? Is it not powerful enough that our hopes and fears must expect more than it performs ? Is the progress of what consumes us too slow ? Is the parent of age, the nurse of worlds, the teacher of all science, unable to do enough for us, and incapable to bring about our affairs ! Shall that which lent leisure to the creation of light, and the reforming of chaos, not afford hours for the clearing a doubt, or settling an uncertainty ! Shall this midwife to the works of infinity, and the birth of the universe, not bring forth a little accident ? I find time to be trusted ; it brings about all I would have it do, but that it goes an evener pace than desire ; for the future I will rely upon it. Fear may add

weight to my heart, or hope may give wings to my wishes, but they cannot impose delay or haste on Time; he goes on the same pace when Cæsar wants his assistance to conquer the world, or a child to ripen him a cherry; therefore how vain a thing is hope, and how wise a man is my fisherman! Those things determined I have nothing more to say, but that, whether tyrannised by fear, or deluded by hope, in every disposition of mind, every situation of circumstances, and in every point of time,

I am,  
with the greatest gratitude, and  
affection, and love,  
your Grace's  
much obliged, and faithful,

E. ROBINSON.

*To Mrs. Donnellan.*

*Mount Morris, 1742.*

I most sincerely congratulate my dear friend on the recovery of Mr. Percival. I know that Mrs. Percival and you must have suffered extremely for one for whom you have so tender and just a regard. I hope this fear has not worn any traces of melancholy in your memory, but that you are in spirits and health. I cannot help writing to you, as I imagine you may be melancholy. I am no farther sunk in that abyss than dullness ; if you can endure that, I will thank your patience and proceed ; I come to you to ask for something to say. I want to know how the world goes on ; we stand still here. Dullness, in the solemn garb of wisdom, wraps us in its gentle wing, and here we dream that others do ill, and happy are we that do nothing. One yawns there is peace in solitude ; another stirs the fire, and cries how happy is liberty and independ-

ence ; another takes a pinch of snuff and praises leisure ; another pulls a knotting shuttle out of their pockets, and commends a little innocent amusement ; their neighbour more laborious, making a lace with two bobbins, says business should be preferred to pleasure and diversions. How wise is every body by their own fire-side, and how happy every one in their own way ! What glorious things do the ambitious say of ambition, and what mighty phrases do they adorn the giant with ! How civilly do the indolent speak of idleness, and how prettily do the trifling express trifles ; how cunning do those think themselves who live in cities, and how innocent do they look upon themselves to be who dwell in the country ; how crafty such as belong to court, how holy they that are of the church ;

See some strange comfort through our lives attend,  
And pride bestowed on all a common friend.

If we are apt to admire, 'tis from taste ; if  
to despise, from our superiority ; are we



affectionate, 'tis from goodness ; if indifferent, from philosophy ; if we are lucky, what success attends on prudence ; if unfortunate, blind chance does all. Self-love, the only honest flatterer, attends on our disgrace, and covers it with indulgent phrases that lean still toward our honour and praise ; it dignifies our idleness and justifies our employments, makes our choice prudent, and all our means honest ; but though we approve our manner of life, and “our kind of as it were” in the country, we have some curiosity after the actions of those who are employed in public affairs. By the votes of the Parliament, which we have sent down to us, there seems to be much courage and firmness in the senators. I wish, now they seem an independent company, they may do some service to their country ; when they are again enlisted under the banners of corruption and bribery, nothing is to be expected, for all ministers are alike ; and all I expect, is, to see those that lately have appeared as knaves, look like fools ; those that have looked like fools, appear

as knaves. I would the good precept, be angry and sin not, were divided between the parties in power and out of it, that the first would not sin, and the second would not be angry ; but between the wickedness of the powerful, and the wrath of the disappointed, there is no peace in Israel. I sent Mrs. Percival some cowslips to town by my second brother, for I would not again trust them with the carrier, who had kept them in his warehouse, where one canister was damaged by the damp so that I could not send it. And I was indeed ashamed to send such a small quantity, but the rest were spoiled by the man's carelessness. Have you music to your soul's content ? I imagine to harmonious ears it must be a delightful entertainment, and I wish you much of it ; it is wise to make the most of time we may, and let every hour comprehend the most of pleasure that it can. That delight which we do not pay with pain is ever worth seeking ; every particular pleasure swells our account of happiness, and it is a false wisdom that

pretends to despise pleasure. We might as well refuse to live, because we do not exist in the eternal and solid duration of time like the Supreme Being, as decline and despise pleasures because they are transient. What belongs to us that is not so? All is succession; fleeting time bears all away. Our fancies mount the wing and fly before our possessions vanish. Our wish obtained, desire goes on and leaves possession as a load behind. I suppose it is in musical entertainments as in life; first, an impatience for the overture and first entrance; then, no less for the opera; tired of that too, discontented at a want of harmony, and ill pleased with the catastrophe, we are glad to leave the theatre. Many people languish through life, as at the opera, from a want of taste; others, too delicate connoisseurs, are over exquisitely pained and pleased. Pain is as much worse than indifference as pleasure is better, so what temper to choose would be difficult if we had it in our power, but these things are beyond our power. Nature is the master that teaches

tastes ; on him depends our disposition of mind, and as it leans we must bend.

I am, dear Madam, &c. &c.

E. ROBINSON.

*To the Rev. Mr. Freind.*

SIR,

I CONGRATULATE you upon the safe delivery of Mrs. Freind, and the birth of your little daughter, whom I wished handsome for no reason but that she might bear an entire resemblance to her mother : however, one cannot judge at all of her beauty now. Cleopatra and Mother Shipton were born equally handsome. I am glad you have a daughter, for as I am concerned for the honour of our sex, I take a pleasure and a pride in seeing them, as Providence designed them fairest and best of all God's creatures. But though they are by outward form most obliged to nature, in the in-

ward fashion nature is ungratefully allowed no part. Affectation and absurd custom are often made their tutors, and their manners are all art. Dissimulation is looked upon by many fathers and mothers as an accomplishment, and ignorance as a merit; and a woman is turned into the world to act by deceit or folly as either happens to prevail in her mind. I am sure you will give the little demoiselle an excellent education, and teach her it is much easier to be what one should be, than to seem what one is not, which is an œconomy of behaviour those observe who have the thirst of praise without the taste of virtue. The love of praise is certainly a great incentive to virtue, but it is the misfortune of many women to place their vanity upon their beauty; and then it will not make one effort towards worthiness; therefore, it is of great consequence a girl should not look upon beauty as a meritorious thing, but only esteem it as a lucky accident to have her virtues written in fair characters. A book may be very tiresome, though the print

may be fine, and the only advantage is, that the beauty of the letter may induce people to peruse it; but, when we have read it we give our judgment freely. I have often in company given my attention to a handsome woman whom I did not know, out of a strong prepossession that she must talk sense; and have been very angry that such a fine sign should afford bad entertainment. I would have wrote to you last post, but a violent cold had possessed me with such stupidity I was not able to do it. There is some conceit in mentioning dulness as accidental, but that degree of it which allays impertinence is very new to me. I think I never was more low-spirited than I was during the last two days, and I am not yet half well; when I mend you shall have a longer letter, at present it will be a favour to shorten this. I saw some fine jewels that are to adorn my fair enemy, Mrs. S——: I beheld them without envy, and was proud to think that a woman who is thought worthy to wear seven thousand pounds to adorn her person,

should do me the honour to envy and hate me. Her malice, more than my vanity, persuaded me there was some competition between us ; but I will never attempt to outshine her in bought or borrowed lustre. Some of fortune's favours I may wish for, but these gew-gaws and trinkets I shall never covet. If superfluity were my portion, I hope I should rather make others happy than myself fine with it. Were fortune particularly kind to me, I should rather wish to justify her partiality than to be ostentatious, and surely of all vanities that of jewels is the most ridiculous. They do not even tend to the order of dress, beauty and cleanliness, for a woman is not a jot the handsomer or the cleaner for them. I do not mean to condemn Miss W—— in particular, for this ; she has the best justifications vanity can have—beauty and riches. I speak only of the general taste. I should take it as an ill compliment of generosity to address itself to my vanity or extravagance, but it is thought a sign of love and esteem for a

man to make himself uneasy in his circumstances, that his wife may glitter ; an intimation from the first that mutual happiness is not the foundation of matrimony.

I am, Sir,  
your obedient humble servant,  
E. ROBINSON.

*To the Same.*

SIR,

WE had the pleasure of receiving your answer to our contradictory epistles, which were wrote in that empressement one feels for the concerns of a friend. The poor little man is held to this world by a weak thread of life which the fatal sisters will very shortly snip. I enquire after him continually, that you may be early apprized of his departure. I wonder his victory over the terrestrial part should be so difficult ; such a mighty and stirring



spirit seems as if it could easily break through such a poor intrenchment. I am sorry for his decay, for he really made the best of bad materials, and carved both happiness and merit out of the worst stuff in the world. His bodily infirmities he supported with great cheerfulness, and the malady of his mind, his vanity, he turned to generosity; so that with the chief occasion of misery, sickness, and the first principle of self-love, vanity, he was both happy in himself and useful to others. I fear they who would bring good works out of humanity, must work them out of infirmities; for of natural goodness there is not enough for all purposes. Just here came in my mantua-maker to alter an old gown, and I have found how difficult a matter it is to hide a dirty spot in a plain ground; indeed she tells me if there was a full pattern it might be overlooked, or mistaken for a shade in the silk. Thus it is with our moral imperfections; they are hid in the variety of our actions, and escape observation by the intricacy of the design. At

first we wear a fault as I did a spot on the sleeve, but when we perceive the world takes notice of it, we patch it with hypocrisy, and are not at the pains of taking it out, but put it under a plait; and quit the gay content of heedlessness for a wary state of cunning, and dress for the eyes of the world, though conscience knows we are in masquerade. I am sorry I cannot tell you any political news, but there is nothing of that kind stirring, that is of such authority, that one should think it worth repeating, The secret committee is composed of very secret committee men; they say nothing. I was at the opera on Saturday night, where was all the world. I was very well diverted between the opera and the audience, or I ought rather to say the spectators; for they came to see, and not to hear. I heard that the elephant was the finest thing in the opera, but that was contradicted, and the burning of the temple was preferred to it. To accommodate every thing to the absurdity of the town, the dancing is rendered more ridiculous

and grotesque than ever. I was thinking if the court of Augustus could have seen the polite part of our nation admiring a wooden elephant with two lamps stuck for eyes ; and poor Scipio and Asdrubal could have risen to have seen themselves covered with silver spangles and quavering an Italian air, what an honest indignation and scorn would they have conceived at us ? Scipio would be mightily pleased to see himself represented as the slave to a dimple, a poor creature made of song, silk, and civility. I think it is monstrous that these people should trifle thus with the names of great men. The amours of Narcissus and Echo, the harmonious strains of Nero, or the gentle manufacture of the soft spinning Sardanapalus, are proper subjects for operas ; but heroes should not be exposed in an absurd light. It lessens the regard people should have for exalted virtue, and when a man has filled the large voice of fame with his great renown, is it not hard she should suffer his name to be squeaked in treble notes in such ridiculous memorial ?

Fame blows so many winds I wonder any should worship her with a constant devotion. Is it not better to be forgotten than to be remembered in the book of folly? When all men are wise general opinion will be worth something; but till then, let Monro prescribe to the love of fame. I am very sorry to hear Mrs. Freind recovers so slowly; my best wishes attend her, but if they had been of any use she would never have been sick; pray let me hear often how she does. My sister Pea is abroad; I am confined again by a little feverishness. I thought as it was a London fever it might be polite, so I carried it to the ridotto, court, and opera, but it grew perverse and stubborn, so I put it into a white hood and a double handkerchief, and kept it by the fire-side these three days, and it is better; indeed I hope it is worn out. On Saturday I intend to go to Goodman's Fields to see Garrick act Richard the Third, that I may get one cold from a regard to sense. I have sacrificed enough to folly in catching colds at the great

puppet shows in town : if I have a rational constitution I shall not be the worse for my entertainment. Pea charged me with her compliments before she went out. We are infinitely obliged to you for your esteem, and will do, (what all will not do for esteem) endeavour to deserve it. I am glad you give me such a good account of my brother's health. Health is an excellent thing, but one may be tolerably happy without enjoying it for oneself, but we may be impatient for our friends, and anxious if they are not well ; solicitude for them bears the fair name of tenderness, but when it is employed about our proper persons it grows contemptible ; it then becomes our pride to disdain pain, as before in the other case we think it virtue to pity it. I had many compliments from Sir Thomas Robinson at the ridotto ; he seems happy in the thoughts of his government. I heard he was to make a princess of Lady Bridget ———, but I hope there is nothing in the report, for Lady Bridget is not rich. What a fashionable exception have I made ! and

having passed over the objection of folly, have laid a prudent emphasis upon the want of riches. What an unreasonable letter is here ! I will put an end to it ; all happiness attend you and Mrs. Freind. May she give you every day the pleasure of seeing her recover health. Adieu ; I am yours and Mrs. Freind's most sincere and obliged,

E. R.

P. S. I was obliged to keep my letter two days before I could get a frank to inclose it in : and now to send you all the news I hear, I must tell you advice is come this morning that Anson has taken three ships laden with silver, and is going to Chagre, and from thence to Panama. Vernon and Wentworth are to go with him, and Trelawney is to accompany them to reconcile their resolutions. The courtiers hinted among their threats in the House that the Parliament should be dissolved ; the other side said, they that were in that inclination were betrayers of their country.

*To Miss S. Robinson.*

*Whitehall.*

MY DEAR SISTER,

I AM just going to the ridotto, so you may flatter yourself with the hopes of a short letter. I proposed writing to you this morning, but was prevented by company, and I have now taken up my pen to tell you that I am well. I have been so prudent lately as to refuse dancing; see what serious lessons time teaches. I was yesterday with Miss Kitty Knatchbull; poor Sir Wyndham is truly afflicted. Some men, you see, still love their wives; a little encouragement for us to venture. For my part, I only desire a man to love me all my life, whether it happens to be a long or a short lease of liking; I will give him his acquittance, and he may like what and whom he pleases afterwards; but while I live he must be mine and only mine; nay, he must guide his thoughts and looks to me, nor go so far as to like any one besides. Such were

Prior's directions to his mistress, and if a man has not as much constancy, as I have delicacy upon this head, he may bestow his wandering affections elsewhere; I am sure I should not value them. Mrs. Botham is at Elford with Lady Andover, which I am glad of, for poor Lydia has a taste for conversation above the hum-drum mediocrity of common understandings. Lord B—— has the gout at Bath, and is by that means detained there, to the sore mortification of the Countess, who would rather read the present page of life than study over Horace or Virgil. You have probably heard Mr. C—— mentioned as Miss M——'s lover; but being by her rejected with all the ~~pomp and~~ pride of prudery, he sought one perhaps less fair, but more kind. The siege was not so tedious here, the lady not having the double ramparts of beauty and fortune; she has however brought a large portion of gratitude and good humour, which must have compensated his loss. I suppose you have taken leave of balls for some time; nothing but



Orpheus's harp, which made trees dance, could make 'you a ball at Horton. My brother Tom takes the triumph of Mr. M——'s conversion to dancing, from your eyes, to give it to white stockings. Do such strange effects come from the hosiers? His love is in its infancy, according to Prior, since it is now in his heels. Give my love to all at home.

My dearest sister,  
I am your's most affectionately,  
E. ROBINSON.

*To the Same.*

DEAR SISTER,

I HEARTILY congratulate you upon your joyful deliverance from dull company. It is a strange thing that while self-love is in all people apparently predominant, any one will prefer a stupid companion to the converse of their own imagination.

Yet we sometimes see ingenious persons fond of the insipid, and court their society, rather than live in solitude. For my own part, I am so happily partial to myself, that if I find I am tired of myself, I think it so strong a symptom of dullness, that I am for the time discouraged from producing myself to others. There are many who enjoy a bodily life, and are never pleased but when they are moving from place to place. With them Alma is a mere machine, and just rules the laws of motion, but never finds the benefit of change. There are many people who ride post through the world, and are always running upon a fool's errand. Others have a body as lazy and weak as their minds, and they sit still and pick straws, or play at cards, which they barbarously call killing time. I am going to the play to-night to see Mrs. Woffington act Sir Harry Wildair in the Constant Couple. My brother Matt comes to town to-morrow. I was yesterday at the Dutchess of Kent's, and I called at Mrs. Knight's; and after some more formal

visits I returned home and read very quietly. You see how grave I am when not seduced; but that you may not think me in the vapours, I will own to you that I am to go to an assembly on Monday, the opera on Tuesday, with a long et cætera of gaiety. Lord George Bentinck has been extremely ill; I was very sorry, for he is one of the best natured men I ever saw in a family, and extremely polite and well bred to every body. One of the Trevors is to marry Doctor Alured Clarke; but there is no match like Miss Fane's; so much sense and merit will outshine all the diamonds of the mines, and there is real greatness too. They are both deserving, and I dare say will be extremely happy. I suppose I often send you news that you have heard before; but I would rather run the hazard of being impertinent, than that you should be ignorant. The Westminster election was declared void by a majority of four, to the great joy and triumph of the country party. Admiral Haddock is at Gibraltar with only thirteen ships, the French and Spa-

niards have forty-one, and they coop him up wondrous close. I imagine there will be a second edition of ghosts for Mr. Glover. There is a report (I hope unfounded) that the new Czarina has put the little Czar, the Great Dutchess, and the Duke of Brunswick to death. Ambition loves human sacrifice, and I think it is in all respects a cruel power. Its votaries must sacrifice their own ease and honesty, and often much more, to gain its favours: and when we have got the rich trifles and serious bagatelles of fortune, we must make anxiety their guard. Jealousy attends on power, avarice, and riches; much care is wanted to keep what we cannot enjoy. Most frequent is the ~~failed punishment~~ of Ixion and Tantalus. The head that covets power is troubled with a restless giddiness, while grasping avarice is punished with eternal thirst. I had an excellent letter last week from C—. She has discovered a great deal of truth without one moment's study. There is a felicity of genius that despises opportunity and method; I should as

little have expected moral reflections from her, as from the keeper of a raree-show, as she passes her life among the puppets and wax-work of the world. Reason can seldom find her disengaged, and as for reflection it can hardly catch her at home, and alone. What a friendship in Miss ——! I should sooner choose Greenland for my climate, than a friend of so frigid a heart and head.

I am, my dear sister,  
your's very affectionately,

E. ROBINSON.

*To the Dutches of Greenland.*

*Friday, Aug. 6, 1742.*

DEAR MADAM,

I RETURN your Grace a thousand thanks for your letter; the good wishes of a friend are of themselves a happiness, and believe me I have always thought myself the nearer being happy because I knew

you wished me so. If your affection to me will last as long as my love and gratitude towards you, I think it will stay with me till the latest moment I shall have in this world; no alteration of circumstance, or length of time, can wear out my grateful remembrance of your favours to me; you have a station in my heart, from whence you cannot be driven while any one virtue lives in it; truth, constancy, gratitude, and every honest affection guard you there. Mr. Montagu desires me to make his compliments to my Lord Duke and your Grace, with many thanks for the favour his Grace designs him of a visit, which he is not willing to put off so long as our return from Yorkshire, but will be glad of the honour of seeing the Duke on Monday, at seven o'clock, in Dover Street; and I hope at that most happy hour to have the pleasure of seeing you. We shall spend that evening in town. If you will be at home to-morrow, at two o'clock, I will pass an hour with you; but pray send me word to Jermyn-street at eleven,

whether I can come to you without meeting any person at Whitehall but the Duke; to every one else pray deny your dressing room. Mr. Freind will tell your Grace I behaved magnanimously; not one cowardly tear, I assure you, did I shed at the solemn altar, my mind was in no mirthful mood indeed. I have a great hope of happiness; the world, as you say, speaks well of Mr. Montagu, and I have many obligations to him which must gain my particular esteem; but such a change of life must furnish one with a thousand anxious thoughts. Adieu, my dear Lady Dutchess, whatever I am, I must still be with gratitude, affection, and fidelity,

your's,

E. MONTAGU

*To Mrs. Montagu.**Hildersham near Linton, August 17th, 1742.*

MADAM,

I SHOULD have paid my compliments earlier on the joyful occasion of your marriage, if I had known whither to address them; for your brother's letter, which informed me, happened to lie several days at Cambridge before it came to my hands. My congratulation, however, though late, wants nothing of the warmth, with which the earliest was accompanied; for I must beg leave to assure you, that I take a real part in the present joy of your family; and feel a kind of paternal pleasure, from the good fortune of one, whose amiable qualities I have been a witness of, from her tenderest years, and to whom I have ever been wishing and omimating every thing that is good. I have always expected from your singular merit and accomplishments, that they would recommend you



in proper time to an advantageous and honourable match ; and was assured from your prudence, that it would never suffer you to accept any which was not worthy of you ; so that it gives me not only the greatest pleasure on your account, but a sort of pride also on my own, to see my expectations so fully answered, and my predictions of you so literally fulfilled. As all conjugal happiness is founded on mutual affection, cherished by good sense ; so you have the fairest prospect of it now open before you, by your marriage with a gentleman, not only of figure and fortune, but of great knowledge and understanding ; who values you not so much for the charms of your person, as the beauties of your mind, — which will always give you the surest hold of him ; as they will every day be gathering strength, whilst the other are daily losing it. But I should make a sad compliment to a blooming bride, if I meant to exclude her person from contributing any part to her nuptial happiness ; that is far from my meaning, and yours, Madam,

I am sure could not fail of having its full share in acquiring your husband's affection. What I would inculcate therefore is only this ; that though beauty has the greatest force to conciliate affection, yet it cannot preserve it without the help of the mind ; and whatever the perfections of the one may be, the accomplishments of the other will always be the more amiable ; and in the married state especially, will be found after all, the most solid and lasting basis of domestic comfort. But I am using the privilege of my years, and instead of compliments, giving lessons to one who does not want them. I shall only add, therefore, my repeated wishes of all the joy that matrimony can give both to you and Mr. Montagu, to whose worthy character I am no stranger, though I have not the honour to be known to him in person, and am with a sincere respect,

Madam, your faithful friend,  
and obedient servant,

CONYERS MIDDLETON.

*To the Dutchess of Portland.**Allerthorp, Thursday 21st August, 1742.*

MADAM,

I DO verily believe your Grace half condemns me for not having wrote before to you ; but I will give your curiosity ample satisfaction, and your indignation an entire pacification, before I have finished my letter. That I did not write upon the road is very accountable ; first, I was lazy, which is sometimes the case ; secondly, I was stupid, which I will not take upon me to say is not always the case ; but the truth is, I was dull without a zest of the pert or impertinent ; and so, thirdly and lastly, I said nothing, because I had nothing to say. On Tuesday I arrived at this place, not tired of my journey, but satisfied therewith. As far as Nottingham you will travel very soon, and then as far as Doncaster, therefore it will be but impertinent to give you an account of the road or any thing concerning it. I

will only tell your Grace I saw Nottingham castle, where there is beauty and magnificence worthy the wisdom and the riches of your ancestors. As we came nearer to this place the country grew more wild but not less beautiful; we came through some rivers that charmed me beyond all things: whether they were once melting maids, or weeping lovers, I don't know; but since the world is grown laborious those idle tales are forgotten which once were sung to the happy shepherd's oaten reed. I am surprized you do not fix a time for going into the country. I imagine you will spend your Christmas there; but did ever any one go into the country above a hundred miles to gather snow-drops, or take a winter's blast? We have at present very fine weather, the sun gilds every object, and I assure you it is the only fine thing we have here, for the house is old and not handsome; it is very convenient, and the situation extremely pleasant; we found the finest peaches, nectarines, and apricots, that I have ever

eat; your Grace will think I mean turnips, carrots, and parsnips; but really and truly they are apricots, peaches, and nectarines. To-morrow, I believe, will be one of the happiest days I ever spent; I am to go to fetch my brothers from school; how delightful will be such a meeting after so many years separation! I am glad Dupp remembers no more his labour and sorrow, for joy that a male child is born into the world: I think no man better deserves a child; the end justifies the means, else what should one say for his extreme, surprising, amazing fondness for the lady? It is very indelicate to be so fond of all that composition of julep, jalap, pill, and bolus; her breath must smell like a galipot of physio, and a box of salve, endearing charms to an apothecary, but *un peu degoûtant* to a man of quality. "To bring such a slovenly corse betwixt the wind and his nobility!" I am glad there was a child; but pray was there not a little souterkin for the joy of the lady's relations? Pray is the Dupplinnetto so

like his father as to talk to the first ear he meets? I imagine my lady will never suffer it to learn to walk, because that is too rude an exercise. I imagine, when it is eight years old, instead of going to Westminster School, it will be sent to Apothecaries' Hall, and there have its stomach improved till it is able to digest Album Græcum. I am glad Lord Dupp enjoys his liberty and leisure; the repose a gentleman takes after the honour of sending a son into the world, may be called ease with dignity. Mr. Montagu begs his compliments to your Grace and my Lord Duke; my sister desires the same.

I am his Grace's most obedient, and  
 ever my dear Lady Dutchess's  
 most obliged, faithful, and affectionate,  
 E. MONTAGU.

*To the Same.*

*Allerthorpe, August the 24th, 1742.*

MADAM,

WHAT can your Grace be doing in town at this time, that you neglect the memory of departed Fidget? I know London cannot afford you at this time either business or diversion, and yet you write not; are you setting Chaos to rights, teaching Mr. Achard patience, or Lord Titchfield deliberation, or what mighty or impossible work have you undertaken, that you are thus cruelly engaged? I have got my three brothers with me, un très-bon mari, and a huge family to take care of, all new acquisitions, and I write and your Grace replieth not, answereth not. You know I am so very a sister I cannot help talking of my brothers; I find them just as I would wish them, sensible, good-natured, and sober, and the most affectionate towards each other of any children of their age that ever I saw; they have very good characters at school,

both as to their learning and behaviour ; but the quintessence of perfection is my brother Jack. I had a letter from Mrs. Donnellan last post, who tells me, you will stay a fortnight longer in town, which I believe is not disagreeable to you, and verily a day in your house is better than ten thousand in the dwelling of the formal ; you must bid adieu to that happiness that knows no hours, and the sweet liberty of pinning your ruffles at dinner-time, the valuable privilege of making every meal wait till it is cold, and the noble prerogative of having the coach wait at the door for two hours : all those difficulties of life which you now conquer like prudent Fabius by delay, you must encounter in haste ; and in short your life, which hitherto has been the finest impromptu extant, must now be all readiness and compliance with the tyranny of time : the clock which for many years has been your most neglected slave, will now be your very punctual governor. Alas ! that your Grace should ever be



compelled to make use of your watch ! I have wrote twice to you before I have once wrote to my congratulating correspondents ; but to-morrow I shall begin to thank my well-wishers, who, I believe, are very good people, for I think their prayers have prevailed which they offered for my happiness. My friend C—— S—— is going to be married to Mr. B——, a man of great riches in prospect, and twelve hundred per annum in present : she is a very good young woman ; the man is a little simple, but Miss S—— is not critical in understandings, and there is sense in twelve hundred a year, so I rejoice at the match, as I believe she will be very easy ; happy is a choice word, and not to be profaned ; however, if he is simple she has good sense enough, and he has a tenacious prudence that will hold fast his estate : it must be irksome to submit to a fool ; the service of a man of sense is perfect freedom ; where the will is reasonable, obedience is a pleasure, but to run of a fool's errand all

one's life is terrible. My best wishes ever wait on the little ones.

I am, dear Madam,  
your most obliged, and most grateful,  
E. MONTAGU.

*To Mrs. Freind*

*Allerthorpe, August the 27th.*

DEAR COUSIN,

I AM ashamed that I have not before answered your kind letter, and returned thanks for those good wishes of whose accomplishment I hope there is the fairest prospect ; I think we increase in esteem without decaying in complaisance, and I hope we shall always remember Mr. Freind and the fifth of August with thankfulness. I am infinitely obliged to Mr. Freind for not letting the knot be tied by the hands of an ordinary bungler ; he was very good in coming to London on purpose, but he did not give his last

benediction, but stole away before my sister or any of us were come down stairs. We arrived at this place after a journey of six days, through fine countries, where the riches of harvest promised luxury to the landlord, plenty to the farmer, and food to the labourer. Here we are situated in a fine country, and Mr. Montagu has the pleasure of calling many hundred pounds a year about his house his own, without any person's property interfering with it; I think it is the prettiest estate, and in the best order, I ever saw; large and beautiful meadows for riding or walking in, and all as neat as a garden, with a pretty river\* winding about them, upon which we shall sometimes go out in boats. In this parish Dr. Robinson, our general uncle, has founded a school, and an alms-house, where the young are taught industry, the old content: I propose to visit the alms-house, very soon. I saw the old women with the bucks upon their sleeves at church, and the sight gave me pleasure; heraldry

\* The Swale.

does not always descend with such honour as when charity leads her by the hand. Our uncle did this good while he was alive; it was not that soulthift that would save itself with another's money. I hope you will forgive my not having wrote to you before, but a new family, and a new place, must take up one's time. Our house here is tolerably convenient, and that is all that can be said for it: we have a better, which I hope you will often see in Berkshire. Pray, when you and Mr. Freind have a leisure hour, dispose of it in writing to me. Mr. Montagu has an estate near Rokeby, from whence I intend to visit Sir Thomas Robinson's fine park, of which I hear great praises.

I am, dear Madam,  
 your most affectionate cousin,  
 and obedient humble servant,

ELIZ. MONTAGU.

*To the Dutchess of Portland.**Sept. 19, 1742.*

MY DEAR LADY DUTCHESS,

THERE is a great pleasure in conversing with a friend in this manner, when the thought goes from my heart directly to your's, without passing through the ways of ceremony, or suffering the enquiry of curiosity. I have accordingly sent this by the way your Grace directed, that I might enquire into the real state of your mind, and discover the situation of mine. I assure you your letters to me, and mine to you, pass under no examination. My friend is above curiosity and suspicion of any sort, and is always pleased at my taking all opportunities of conversing with you after this or any other manner. He would gain a heart by generous and kind usage, but never confine one by severity and constraint; he is never better pleased than at any instance of affection that

passes from me to my friends, or from them to me ; and is entirely sensible of the happiness, honour, and advantage of your Grace's friendship to me. I hope you had my letter which I wrote to Welbeck, in which I took care to make you but the second person, though in my thoughts you will ever be the first, even among the queens and princesses of the earth. I want to know how you go on, what you suffer from certain important nods and significant whispers, pretty embellishments of silence, or a pause in conversation, if a pause there can be where there is that most voluble orator. It is surprizing what nothingisms make a figure in polite conversations ; repetition is a sign of emptiness, yet there are living echoes, where dwells sound without sense or invention. The nymph Echo, of old, was in love with Narcissus ; the Narcissus's of these days are in love with Echo ; fond to hear themselves say what others think for them.

I went last week, with my sister, to see Lord Ailesbury's place ; nature has done

much for it, but art has forborne her aid. I suppose the wild graces of Tanfield will be outdone by the improved beauties of Studley ; but, for my part, I should prefer a belle sauvage to an accomplished court beauty. Our pleasures seem too much prepared and studied, but those we find in a mere natural scene appear accidental, and free from labour and contrivance, those enemies of surprize, and preparers of expectations, the great anticipator of human joy. Sir Miles Stapylton called to-day, when I was preparing to write to you. Lady Stapylton is at Beaconsfield, by which I lose one of my best neighbours ; I would that in the balance of fortune some of the worst were there.

I am, my dear Lady Dutchess, &c.

E. MONTAGU.

*To the Same.*

*Allerthorpe, Oct. 2, 1742.*

MY MOST DEAR FRIEND,

LOVE is the fulfilling of the law ; your Grace orders me to write to you a sheet of quarto paper brimful ; behold, my inclination, exceeding your command, has chosen a folio. Most glad I am to lengthen out the time I may thus employ ; how few conversations are there wherein the head or the heart are interested ! If the country would afford a few reasonable companions, or burthen us with none that are not so, it would really make life a different thing ; but for me, who have not any sociable instinct, to lead me to creatures merely human, and, I think, scarce rational, it is really not a place of uninterrupted felicity. I do hourly thank my stars I am not married to a country squire, or a beau, for in the country all my pleasure is in my own fire-



side, and that only when it is not littered with queer creatures. One must receive visits and return them, such is the civil law of the nations; and if you are not more happy in it in Nottinghamshire than I am in Yorkshire, I pity you most feelingly. In London, if one meets with impertinence and offence, one seeks entertainment and pleasure only, but here one commits wilful murder on the hours, and with premeditated malice to oneself becomes *felo de se* for whole days. For an antediluvian a dining visit was proportioned to the time he had to throw away, but for the juniors of Methusalem to be thus prodigal of life, is the way to be soon bankrupt of leisure and happiness. Could you but see all the good folks that visit my poor tabernacle; O, your Grace would pity and admire! You make complaints of a want of conversation; to your sighs I reply in murmurs. When may I hope for our meeting in London? Till you come, kings palaces and high places appear desolate. The Parliament, I hear, will meet on the 15th of Novem-

ber, but you did not use to come up till January—a barbarous and heathenish custom ; though when I was passing time in the delights of Bullstrode I was of another opinion. Oh Bullstrode, Bullstrode ! when I forget thee may my head and hand forget their cunning ! A small loss perhaps you will think for the most unpolitic head, and the most unskilful hand in the world ; but their little *savoir faire* is necessary. I hope to see Bullstrode again before my eyes grow dim with age, and, what is more presumptuous, to see the honour and ornaments of Bullstrode at Sandlesford. Mr. William Robinson is just come, I must go down to him.

I am returned again to my dear Lady Dutchess ; I stole from the company below stairs, after they had drunk tea, and have again for the thousandth time read over your delightful letter ; you have brought wit out of —— and —— ; verily I had not known the trees by the fruit, but you can work wonders when you please. They are indeed half as witty as Sir John Falstaff ; that is, they are the cause of

wit in other people. Your account of them is extremely entertaining; but I forgot that you never could write tolerably, but were always a mighty dull correspondent; you have told me so a thousand times, and it is a strange thing I never could remember it. I should be glad to have a party of horse to guard your letters, but for mine I am assured they will go very safely by the by-post; if I revoke I will pay two tricks, as they do at cards. I am sorry my first letter was not so formidably formal\* as it should have been, but, to say the truth, I thought if it was too much upon the serious it would be suspected of being wrote for the occasion. As for what I said of Don, if ——— likes her, we are of the same opinion, if not, we shall not be rivals. I said, in my last letter, that I should not write to you till I had finished my peregrinations, and intimated that I should forbear troubling you with a letter till I could send your Grace a map of

\* The Dutchess was unwilling to show the whole of their intimate correspondence to Lady Oxford.

Yorkshire ; you may suppose that was said on purpose to prevent any enquiries after my letters, for as to my travels, the serjeant's circuit round the fire would be a tour as well worthy of memory. Pray when shall you visit the noble family at Brodsworth ? I wish I was in their neighbourhood ; I fancy it is a paradisaical family, and having the honour to be in some degree of favour with your Grace, I should hope to be admitted to their acquaintance. I honour their manner of life, and affection for each other ; to maintain continual cheerfulness, without the gay pleasures of our great city, is great praise. Oh that you were to go, with only the Duke, to Brodsworth, and that Doncaster were within a day's journey from hence, I have love for your company that would, if not remove mountains, pass them. We might meet at Doncaster, if it were not for that odious impediment of almost all human desires, impossibility. I should be much diverted to hear that Desdemona was enamoured by these stories passing strange ; the hero

being a fair man into the bargain, and having, in all hair-breadth 'scapes, received not one scar ; it is not impossible but something wondrous pitiful may be awakened in her tender heart. I return a thousand thanks for your long letter ; I rejoice that the Duke and the little angels are well.

I am, Madam,  
your Grace's ever grateful, affectionate,  
faithful, humble servant,  
E. MONTAGU.

*To Mrs. Montagu.*

*Hildersham, Oct. 4, 1742.*

MADAM,

I SHOULD have paid my thanks much earlier for your obliging and entertaining letter, if business of various kinds, and the cares of farming and printing, in both which I am engaged, had not constantly prevented me, till I was forced to a resolution of being prevented by them

no longer. I now therefore beg leave to assure you, that your letter gave me great pleasure on many accounts, but above all, by letting me see that you were not only perfectly at ease, and happy in your late change of condition, but furnished with all the materials proper to secure that happiness for life; since the principles which you lay down for your conduct in it, cannot fail drawing every good out of it, which it can possibly yield. Young ladies who have been admired as beauties, are apt to consider an husband as an acquisition of conquest, and to be shocked at the thought of being reduced by marriage to a state of subjection, and from a resolution to shake off this yoke, often lay the foundation of a contest which begins with matrimony itself, and continues sometimes to the end of it. But this capital point you wisely give up at once, and profess the duty of submission as essential to the character of a good wife; a condescension, that can never betray you into any inconvenience, since a reasonable husband

will never require more of it than is due, and a kind one always be content with less; and when convinced of the disposition, will generally dispense with the act. As your profession, I dare say, is sincere, (for you have not had experience enough to make it the effect of art,) I may trust you with a paradox, which you will certainly find to be true, that the more submissive you are, the less you will be obliged to submit; and should it be your ambition even to govern, you will acquire it with the most ease by acknowledging yourself a subject.

Between a married couple of sense and affection, for it is with such only that any happiness can be found, there can hardly happen any dispute but what must turn upon trifles, or the contrast, perhaps, of some little habits, which, though indifferent in themselves, cannot suffer a contradiction without some regret. But as these are common to both sexes, and every person has his foibles in some degree or other, it must be the business of reason to make this matter easy by mutual

compliances, or a cartel, as it were, of exchange, where those, however, who happen to yield the most, will by that conquest over themselves, which of all others is the most beneficial, be sure to be the greatest gainers in the end. As I have formerly been a musician, so a reflection has sometimes occurred to me, from that art, which might be applied, I think, with good effect to the married state; for from the pains and patience, which are required to put an instrument in tune, before it can afford us any music, I have been induced to wonder why the married pair, who are mutually the instruments of that harmony on which each other's comfort depends, should be generally so regardless of the necessary care of tuning, or reducing each others temper to its proper tone, by softening it when too sharp, and raising it when too low; for I am persuaded that much less pains, than what we employ, without scruple upon an harpsichord, would keep both the husband and wife in, what we call, concert pitch. But some perhaps may be apt to raise a



different reflection from the same subject; that discords in matrimony, like those in music, are both useful and necessary, to enhance and strengthen the harmony of the close. But the comparison will not hold, for the experiment of them will always be dangerous in the married state, where they may be compared more justly to those slight indispositions of the body, which, though they do not threaten the ruin of the whole, yet are apt to weaken some part; and whose proper use is to admonish us to guard our health with the greater care. In short, if two enemies should be forced by any accident to be comrades for life, the necessity of the thing would soon oblige them to become friends. The same reason then, one would think, should more strongly engage a pair of friends, tied together by choice and affection in a partnership inseparable, to extirpate every seed of discord, that might possibly arise betwixt them. I have thrown together these few observations from my long experience of the

married life, not by way of counsel, which you do not want, but in confirmation of those excellent resolutions which your own good sense has suggested to you, and as a testimony of my regard and sincere wishes for your prosperity.

I was much pleased with the account that you gave of your brothers, who after being exposed, as it were, on the mountains of Yorkshire, were discovered at last, like *enfants trouvés*, by a sister unknown to them. I shall always think myself particularly interested in their success, for they were all born under my roof, which may one day perhaps derive an accession of fame from that circumstance. If I should live to see any of them in the University, it would be a pleasure to me to do every thing in my power that might be of use to their improvement.

I hope that you have found leisure to pay your intended visit to Edgely, for whatever entertainment that excursion may afford you, your relation of it, I dare say, will be entertaining to your

friends. The country, as I remember, abounds with natural beauties, but of so wild and romantic a kind, as make the scene fitter for a landscape, than an habitation; and you, who have so good a hand at description, cannot fail to make a fine picture of it. By this time I suppose you begin to think of quitting the country, and returning to your winter quarters in town; Cambridge is but a little out of your road, where we should be proud to receive you at our house. We may plead some kind of right to expect this favour from you both, since this University had the honour of Mr. Montagu's education, and claims some share also in yours. I did not know that your sister was with you, or I should have added our compliments to her, which I desire you to make; and with our wishes of all the happiness to Mr. Montagu and yourself, beg leave to subscribe myself, with the greatest truth,

Madam,

your affectionate friend, &c. &c.

CONYERS MIDDLETON.

*To Mrs. Donnellan.*

*Allerthorpe, October the 10th, 1742.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I HAD the pleasure of finding your letter upon my table last night at my return to Allerthorpe, from whence I had been three days upon an expedition to a wild part of the country called the Dales, where nature's works are not delicate, pretty, and mignonne, but grand, sublime, and magnificent. Vast mountains, rocks, and cascades, and rapid rivers make the country beautiful and surprizing: we went to a farm abounding in wonders, a high hill with some hanging wood before it, behind it a large and rapid river with the prospect of a huge cascade, an old castle, and a church. Some houses in view take from it the honour of absolute solitude; a range of rocks appears like the ruins of an old town on the other side of the river. In the cottage built in this charming place, lives an old woman who

has attained to an hundred and four years, and for this long lease of life has not exchanged the best comfort. She enjoys good health, tolerable strength, has her hearing perfect, and her sight very well; is cheerful, and has not lost her reason or apprehension, but answers with sense and spirit; her hair is of a fine black: she was knitting when we went to her, and has promised to knit me a pair of stockings in a month. My father had a house in this part of the world for the summer sports of shooting and fishing, so that the old woman and I had been well acquainted fifteen years ago, and she told me, laughing, she imagined I did not expect to see her alive at this time. If the near prospect of death is terrible it is a melancholy thing to live till every day of added life is a miracle; but such is the happy and merciful order of things, that hope is eternal, and therefore we cannot outlive it. It has for our amusement the mid-summer's dream, and the winter's tale; and the ear, deaf to all other music, is

still soothed by its flattering voice. You may suppose my old woman is no philosopher, or I would enquire of her what pleasure she had in reflection on the past, possession of the present, or prospect of the future time. Can this world be still a land of promise for her? After so long and weary a journey of life, can hope still lead her by the hand? She remembers the siege of the old castle in Oliver's days, but her billet at the fire was found,

Whoever was deposed or crown'd.

The storms of fate that shake the cedar, sweep lightly over the creeping ivy, and the humble moss; she was too low for the tyrant to oppress, too poor for the usurper to rob, so that all the revolutions of our kingdom have not affected this little subject. I am very glad I am not in any danger of living to this age, for with most people the last page of life is a blank or a tragedy; either insensibility or suffering; and one becomes an object of pity or contempt to the young, or of terror to those approaching age. I return

you many thanks for sending me the means of being warm : the carrier is not yet arrived I thank you for your prudent foresight in making the mantle large enough : I hope in time I may be worthy of it ; but at present the jumps are of a virginal size. As for my complexion, I cannot greatly commend it, but for qualmishness, I am never maukish but when things are too sweet or folks are too civil. Do you think I would be guilty of such an indecorum as to be in so unprudish a way already ? I am glad Mrs. Dewes has not suffered so terribly this time. I hope poor Pen has not been in such fear : as for Pen, she is not a daughter of Eve, but of the collateral branch of Enoch, who walked as an angel before the children of men. I know she would not be guilty of such a grossièreté as having a child for the world : she is a perfect Seraphim, all fine music and pure spirit, and must be grieved her sister should condescend to such mortal matters ; indeed, nothing is less divine and angelical than a breeding woman ; sick with

a piece of toast and butter, or longing for a bit of tripe, liver, or black-pudding. I am obliged to the little Pere for remembering me. If matrimony does not spoil my philosophy faster than it mends my constitution, I may be very philosophical. Tell Mr. Courayer\* my head is as much troubled with chimeras and giddiness as ever. I fear he is too fond of variety in life to be a friend to matrimony: the merriest man I have seen in Yorkshire is a Frenchman, who came here for religion, and has had the needful of life added unto him; he has a little estate, and lives with the mountain nymphs, liberty and health, in the Dales; he amuses himself with singing to his grand children, mending his clothes, and making soup; his grandson eats soup with him, and his next darling, le petit chat, helps him off with the bouillie; he can not only make a fine dish of the cabbage, but of the snails and caterpillars, and what we call the unprofitable

\* Translator of Father Paul's History of the Council of Trent, and of Sleidan's History of the Reformation.



vermin that live upon it ; there was not a creature in Noah's Ark that would not be received into his larder, for a Frenchman is seldom so proud of stomach as to term any thing unclean. I have had the pleasure of hearing often from our amiable Dutchess ; may health and content ever go along with her ! You say nothing of your own health, for which you know I am always anxious. Pray, if the design of your journey to Ireland is laid aside, let me have the satisfaction of hearing it. We must come to town for the Parliament, and I believe not till then. I suppose the P—— depends upon a certain person's coming from abroad. I shall be very glad to be as near you as Dover-street is to Bond-street ; but if it were not for you and my brothers, I could be content to stay here till spring. I suppose you have got Lady Sunderland and Lady Catharine Hanmer in town. I should think Mrs. Duncomb would not stay much longer in the country ; if she is in town, pray make my compliments, as also to Miss Sutton. Mr. Montagu

desires his particular compliments to you: you both deserve each other's esteem, which I think is saying the civillest thing I can to you and to him; you are the best of friends, and he is the best of husbands. I am very happy in a few, which makes up for my want of joy in the multitude, for you know I like but few creatures upon two legs, and none upon four; as for the Ringwoods called squires, or hounds, the Cupids and Dappers called beaux, or lap-dogs, they delight not me; nor parrots, nor fine ladies, nor gossips, nor magpies, nor geese, nor hens, nor notable women: some have a capacious heart that can take in the whole creation; my affections are more contracted.

I am,

dear Madam, your most affectionate

E. MONTAGU.

*To the Dutchess of Portland.**October 17th, 1742.*

MADAM,

I SHALL be extremely mortified if your Grace does not tell me that last week, by a kind of natural impulse, you sung “Patrick Flemming sat on a mountain,” for I was acting the part of Patrick of renowned memory: I was sometimes upon the most magnificent mountains, at others in the most agreeable vallies, in the thickest woods, and the fairest lawns, by the prettiest murmuring streams, the finest smooth-gliding rivers, the hugest roaring cascades; on moors immeasurable, in narrow lanes almost impassable; through sandy ways and rocky roads. All this appears mere fiction, by the serious opprobriously called rodomontade; but it is really a truth; the mountain is a great and unquestionable witness, and the cascade loudly declares the truth of what I say. All these wonders are to be met with in Bishop’s-dale; we went to

Mr. Buckle's (whom you have heard me mention for his care of my youngest brothers), to spend three days; his house is but a mile from that we used to pass the shooting season in, when my father was fond of that diversion; so that nothing was entirely new; but though the lapse of fifteen years has not altered the objects, it has my apprehension of them. The country is perfectly unlike what I have ever seen in other parts of England. I wish my letter could be so affected by the recollection of the place I was in, that my style might be sublime and lofty as the mountain, flowery as the vale, or rapid as the cascade, or smooth, and deep, and gently-gliding as the river; but I was so ill after my jaunt as not to be able to write, and if I had wrote in such suffering circumstances, you neither would have commended the writer nor the writing. My disorder was owing to fatigue: rest and repose, no strangers to the country fire-side, have entirely recovered me, and I am now perfectly well, and in spirits. Had I wings, I would

pierce the recess of your dressing-room,  
turn study and meditation out of doors,  
and banish silence from the place, sit  
down, talk with you, tell you stories, ask  
you questions,

And hear and see you all the while,  
Softly speak, and sweetly smile.

When the bell summoned you to soup  
and ceremony, adieu, jusqu'au revoir,  
and the country mouse would retire to  
Allerthorpe, in like manner as recorded  
by pleasant Master Æsop, and rehearsed  
by the ingenious Lady Harriot Bentinck.  
Mr. Montagu desires his compliments to  
your Grace and my Lord Duke; we talk  
of you and drink your health as often as  
you can expect from sober people. Had  
I married a Tory fox-hunter he might  
have toasted you in a larger draught; but  
for temperate Whigs we do you reason.

I am, my dear Lady Dutchess's most  
grateful, and most affectionate

E. MONTAGU.

*To the Same.**Allerthorpe, October the 30th.*

MADAM,

I IMAGINE your Grace has lately had two very troublesome letters from me; but the charity of your friendship will cover my multitude of sins; so for my transgression of all good manners I will make no more apologies. I am infinitely obliged to you for desiring two sheets of paper full of my ingenious thoughts, but really methinks meditations upon a fire-shovel, and such other matters as come within my observation, ought not to spread themselves over such a vast extent of paper. As to forbearing to tell news, though I am, by natural constitution, prone to tell all I know, yet shall I utter no news, for in very truth I hear none; we Yorkshire folks are very ignorant and barbarous; I cannot be of opinion that this sharp air gives a keen wit; for I have met with many a blunt genius here. If it were as safe for me as it would be pleasant to go

to London, I should be right glad thereof, for I am a very swallow, and cannot abide the country in winter. I love peace with pleasure; but I have such a tendency to dulness, that I am afraid of mere tranquillity.—I love to be a spectator of the rapid world while my little machine is at rest; the actions and passions of others keep me awake, without so far disturbing the constant mood of my calm thoughts, as to make me uneasy; but the lullaby of conversation that one's country visitors entertain one with, affects me with a very intolerable drowsiness: the news and chat of this country touches me no more than the Jewish chronicle does a modern infidel prime-minister; then the panegyric the good people bestow on each other finds no echo in my breast, though, in the hollowness of civil insincerity, I may sometimes be forced to repeat it after them. I assure you it is wonderful, to see people so little admirable so much admired. By the courtesy of Yorkshire, every one is wise and good-natured, with a long et cætera

of virtues, whose existence they only know by hearsay. The Duke of Cl——d is reckoned a good agreeable man; poor creature! is he not fulsome enough without the daub of nauseous praise? A commended fool is that offensive compound, a sweet and a stink: praise that passes from the wise and judicious, to the virtuous and excellent, is sweet in the sense of all men, the reward of past good deeds, and the incentive to future noble actions; but undeserved commendation, flying at random, destroys the value of good fame, by misapplying it. Shall this fairest jewel in the crown of virtue be cast to the common herd? Farewell then all that makes ambition virtue. It is common to cry out that the world is censorious; I think there are so many other vices to which mankind are more prone, that we might better say, it is a covetous world, a luxurious and an ambitious world, &c. &c. &c. I believe other vices do so far exceed this humour, that there are more wicked than condemned people. Censure is bitter indeed, but it is a wholesome



bitter, like wormwood, that preserves the wary breast from the infection and contagion of corrupt and vicious times; it is that necessary

Something beyond the letter of the law.  
That keeps our men and maids in awe.

Many, I fear, would act absurdly if it were not for the fear of ridicule, and wickedly, but for the fear of reproach. Satire is the wholesome medicine of morality that purges and purifies; but it is the sick and not the whole that have need of medicine; to wound innocence is the most unpardonable fault a person can be guilty of. Truth is always divine and holy, and wholesome when severe, but pleasant when it is sweet and gentle; every opportunity of praising merit is grateful to the virtuous mind,

The quality of mercy is not strain'd, but blest alike  
In what it gives and what it takes.

But weak indulgence, masked in mercy's garb, is a very pernicious impostor. You see, my dear Lady Dutchess, I am sur-

feited with this sweetness of conversation here; I fear at London there will be too little charity; but I shall have some friends there who are not afraid of speaking any thing but untruth, and with such is the freedom of conversation; and I am now forbidden the toil and trouble of visiting, and like, other people of a contented disposition, find happiness in my infirmities. I fear, now my trouble abroad is diminished, my happiness at home will be so, for I imagine it will be impossible for Mr. Montagu to delay his journey beyond the meeting of the Parliament; nor indeed can I wish he should, for I think it is the duty of those in the House to attend; and as I believe he never omitted any thing he ought to do, I would not have him begin now. My sister and I shall be a little at a loss for conversation, not that I shall on my part want words, but, like school-boys when they are about their exercises, I may want to borrow a little sense now and then. I wrote to Lady ——— a little while ago; I am

sorry to hear of her want of happiness, but it is thinly sown in this world, and only falls in the lot of the independent; as for absolute independence indeed, there is no such thing in nature; but I mean freedom from fear. The ties of love, though the strictest bands, are easy, those of interest galling. I am extremely concerned at Lady Oxford's and the Duke's illness; pray tell me if your Grace would have me write a visible letter. I should be infinitely obliged to you if you would tell me when Whitehall will become a Paradise to the soul of Madam Fidget. I am always asking about your going to town, but not a word of reply can I extort. How happy will our meetings be this year, free and unconstrained! my little tabernacle shall be sacred to friendship, and its best votary and greatest ornament the Dutchess of Portland. When shall I have arrived at the utmost limit of my love for you? I have long thought I could not love you more, but my regard is ever increasing; I am very

happy if you love me in any proportion  
to that sincere tender, and faithful af-  
fection with which I am,

Madam, ever your's,

E. MONTAGU.

*To the Same.*

Nov. 5.

MADAM,

My heart and hand are too much yours  
to permit me to employ another's to dic-  
tate, or write to your Grace, when I am  
able to do it. I had your letter, for  
which I am obliged to you: I feel all  
the sensibility of friendship when I re-  
flect you are unhappy. I hope my Lord  
Duke will have no more of the complaint  
in his stomach. Lady Oxford really  
knows her remedy, and I hope you will  
prevail upon her Ladyship to go to Bath.  
I had not any letter from Dr. Sandys, but  
you know he has always a very tedious

labour when he goes of a letter. I wish he was well delivered of this, for I am impatient to know my doom; whether I am to sit here, like patience on a monument, or may be allowed, in my quondam character of a Fidget, to bustle into the bustling world. My appetite for the country is satisfied, and I should like to see London fine town again; and I shall be a poor wife (pity, but for the verse, it were maiden) forsaken,

Yet must bear a contented mind,  
But when leave of me he has taken,  
I can't have another as kind.

The last line sets forth the melancholy circumstance. As for single ladies, the loss of a lover is nothing; for, as Milla-mant says, one makes as many as one pleases, and keeps them as long as one pleases; but it is worth while to take care of a good husband, for they are reckoned rarities. I am pretty well at present, but I don't much like this sort of constitution. I believe Sandys would not tell his wife a secret for fear she should

go abroad to tell it, and, you know, he loves she should sit, like sober puss' in the corner, to offend all those who would annoy the cheese, or other good things in his cupboard ; for, I guess, it is from some principle of œconomy that he keeps her at home.

I am, Madam,  
your Grace's faithful, humble servant,  
E. M.

*To the Same.*

*Allerthorpe, Nov. 19, 1742.*

MADAM,

WHAT prophets are my fears ! they whispered to me your Grace was not well, and I find their suggestions were true. Hard state of things, that one may believe one's fears but cannot rely upon one's hopes ! I imagined concern would have an ill effect on your constitution ; I know you have many pledges in the hands of fate, and I feared for you, and every

thing that was near and dear to you. I am sensible your regard and tenderness for Lady Oxford will make you suffer extremely when you see her ill; she has therefore a double portion of my good wishes, on her own and your Grace's account. When sensibility of heart and head makes you feel all the outrages that fortune and folly offer, why do you not envy the thoughtless giggle and unmeaning smile? "In Folly's cup still laughs the bubble joy." Wisdom's cup is often dash'd with sorrow, but the nepenthe of stupidity is the only medicine of life; fools neither are troubled with fear nor doubt. What did the wisdom of the wisest man teach him? Verily, that all was vanity and vexation of spirit! A painful lesson fools will never learn, for they are of all vanities most vain. And there is not so sweet a companion as that same vanity; when we go into the world it leads us by the hand, if we retire from it, it follows us; it meets us at court, and find us in the country; commends the hero that gains the world, and the philo-

sopher that forsakes it ; praises the luxury of the prodigal, and the prudence of the penurious ; feasts with the voluptuous, fasts with the abstemious, sits on the pen of the author, and visits the paper of the critic ; reads dedications, and writes them ; makes court to superiors, receives homage of inferiors ; in short, it is useful, it is agreeable, and the very thing needful to happiness : had Solomon felt some inward vanity, sweet sounds had been ever in his ears without the voices of men-singers, or women-singers ; he had not then said of laughter, what is it ? and of mirth, what doeth it ? Vanity, and a good set of teeth, would have taught him the ends and purposes of laughing, that fame may be acquired by it, where, like the proposal for the grinning wager,

'The frightfullest grinner,  
Is the winner.

Did not we think Lady C—— would get nothing by that broad grin but the tooth-ache ? But vanity, profitable vanity, was her better counsellor ; and as she always



imagined the heart of a lover was caught between her teeth, I cannot say his delay is an argument of her charms, or his gallantry, but she has him secure by an old proverb, that what is bred in the bone will never out of the flesh, and no doubt but this love was bred in the bone, even in the jaw-bone. No wonder if tame, weak man is subdued by that weapon with which Sampson killed the mighty lion. Mr. Montagu got well to London on Monday night. I am glad your facetious senator is gone to Parliament, where all his conversation will be yea, yea, and nay, nay ; and even of that cometh evil sometimes. Time will not allow me to lengthen this epistle with any thing more than my sister's compliments to your Grace.

I am, Madam, your's, &c.

E. M.

*To the Same.*

Nov. 28, 1742.

MADAM,

I AM very sorry I have not received all the letters your Grace has been so good as to write to me; Fate received them into her left hand, and I am deprived of them. I am glad to hear your spirits are better; may circling joys dance round your fire-side,

With Sport that wrinkled Care derides,  
And laughter, holding both his sides !

for life is too short to allow for melancholy fears and intruding cares, which are apt to fill up the youthful time, when we are fittest for happiness. Age will bring its solemn train of woe; let us therefore admit all Youth's gay company, smiling Joy, cheerful Mirth, and happy Hope; life's early Hours come dancing along with their fair partner Pleasure, but in the evening of our day they tread a

heavy measure, dragging after them weak  
Infirmity and sad Regret,

Expençe, and after thought, and idle care,  
And doubts of motley hue, and dark despair.

I grieve whenever I think your mind is pained ; all infirmities and diseases of the body are nothing compared to anguish of heart. I am now in the highest content ; my little brothers are to go to Westminster as soon as the holidays are over, and what adds still to my pleasure in this is, that Jacky's going is owing to Mr. Montagu's intercession for him with my father, who did not design his going to Westminster till next year: our youngest, I believe, is to go out with our new captain. I would give a great deal for a tête-à-tête with your Grace, mais hélas ! ma pauvre tête n'est pas une tête ailée. It would have been a strange and unnatural thing that Dr. Sandys's letter should have miscarried ; my faith has swallowed his advice, and my throat his pills ; so I have endured the country, and taken his physic, very unpalatable things both. I

am pretty well, but I do not like to sit, like puss in the corner, all the winter, to watch what may prove a mouse, though I am no mountain. I am rejoiced Lady Kinnoul, and the young ladies, are with you. I cannot boast of the numbers that adorn our fire-side ; my sister and I are the principal figures ; besides there is a round table, a square skreen, some books, and a work-basket, with a smelling-bottle when morality grows musty, or a maxim smells too strong, as sometimes they will in ancient books. I had a letter to-day from Mr. Montagu, in which he flatters me with the hopes of seeing him at Christmas. I hear your Grace's porter says you will not leave Welbeck these two months, and Elias is no lying man. I know, full well, however he may deny you by parcels, he will not thus in the gross ; so, I imagine, you will not be in London this age, which makes me more contented with being in the country. My Lady Croakledom is croaking on the banks of Styx, where, with Cerberus's barking mouths, and Tysiphone's belle

chevelure, she will make most pleasant melody : with such a noise in his ears how glad would Pluto be if Orpheus would give him a tune once more ! Lady Limerick, imagining I came to town with Mr. Montagu, sent an excuse, that being ill, she had not been able to make me a visit. I guess it would raise great speculations why I was not come up, and had you been within question-shot, the good Countess had popped off a volley upon you, I make no doubt. I hear Lord Cobham and Lord Gower are going to resign ; and, I hope, with less regret than I resign my pen ; but the letters are sent for. Time is a monarch that commands, as many sovereigns do, to the vexation and detriment of their subjects, therefore, to show my loyalty to King Time, I must obey his minister, the hour, that commands my letter hence. My sister desires her compliments.

I am, my dear Lady Dutchess,  
your most grateful and affectionate, ~

E. MONTAGU.

*To the Rev. Mr. Freind.*

SIR,

I THINK I hear you exclaim against long letters from a sober yawning fire-side in the country, and, I own, my paper makes a formidable appearance; but you shall find it so little stained by any tincture of thought, or colour of imagination, that you shall own it differs little from blank paper, the most innocent and inoffensive thing in the world. I know it will please you to hear that I have, every day since you made me a wife, had more reason to thank you for the alteration. I have the honour and happiness to be made the guest of a heart furnished with the best and greatest virtues, honesty, and integrity, and universal benevolence, with the most engaging affection to every one who particularly belongs to him; no desire of power but to do good, no use of it but to make happy. I cannot be so unjustly diffident as to doubt of the

duration of my happiness, when I see the author of it dispensing content to all his dependants, and should he ever cease to use me with more care, generosity, and affection, than I deserve, I should be the first person he has ever treated in this manner. Since I married, I have never heard him say an ill-natured word to any one, nor have I received one matrimonial frown. His generous affection in loving all my friends, and desiring every opportunity for my conversing with them, is very obliging to me. We have often pleased ourselves with the hopes of seeing you frequently in Dover-street this winter; but, alas! I am a prisoner at Allerthorpe, and the worst of prisoners, confined by infirmities and ill health. Mr. Montagu went to Parliament ten days ago, to my mortification, but with my approbation. I desired him to go, and half wished him to stay; I knew his righteous star would rule his destiny; so I helped him on with honour's boots, and let him go without murmuring. He left me my sister, and where she is there will

happiness be also. Her temper is continual sunshine ; she smooths the rugged brow of winter, and, without gloom or storm within doors, we sit contented, though the elements disagree, or the sun refuse to shine. We have not been troubled with any visitor since Mr. Montagu went away, and could you see how ignorant, how awkward, how absurd, and how uncouth the generality of people are in this country, you would look upon this as no trifling piece of good fortune ; had they with their ignorance the naiveté of an ingenuous untaught mind, or the integrity of honest and unexperienced simplicity I could admire the intrinsic worth of the ore, though it had rust upon it ; but, for the most part, they are drunken and vicious, and worse than hypocrites, profligates ; I mean more offensive, and I know not whether less pernicious : but do not mention this, for they will not mend themselves, but may hurt others. I am very happy that drinking is not within our walls ; we have not had one person disordered by liquor since



we came down; though most of the poor ladies in the neighbourhood have had more hogs in their dining-room than ever they had in their hogsty. I hope you will write to me soon; post-days are great comforts to us, and keep our affections awake for our friends. I imagine you will have seen Dr. Middleton's Translations of the Epistles by this time; pray tell me what you think of them, I want much to see them; I love the noble *fierté* of Brutus, in that letter the Doctor translated in the life of Cicero, where Brutus reproaches him with having asked their lives of Octavius; the Doctor objects that there is little policy in it; perhaps it may want a little human prudence, but it has a divine spirit in it: no sophisticated arguments, nor fine-spun politics to prove that right which was wrong till it was profitable and advantageous. How many Brutus's shall we see in our senate this year? Shall they who last year "struck the foremost man i'the world," \* now contaminate their fingers

\* Sir Robert Walpole.

with base bribes? Those who wanted to turn him out, and now would screen him, must have coveted his power, without hating his actions, and are, I think, as void of modesty as of honesty. I hope the few righteous will save the city, and that those who have sacrificed their virtue, honour, and reputation, and have passed through infamy to mammon, will find that their peace of mind was made a victim too; but, alas! all, all look up with reverential awe,

At crimes that 'scape, or triumph o'er the law ;

and the successful wicked are more the envy than the detestation of mankind. I often think that those people are happiest who know nothing at all of the world, and sitting in the little empire of their fire-side, where is no contention or cabal, think we are in a golden age of innocence; for those who are gaining a knowledge of the world are blotting their minds with a register of black deeds; and, except the little Pharisaical triumph that one is not as these Publicans, what

satisfaction can it give? Does the seeing that the generality of men are corrupt, either reward our benevolence, or encourage it? Some people are endued with an apologizing quality that covers spots; but gall, honest, bitter gall, is the only thing that takes out the grease and filth. It is the business of true charity to cure faults or prevent them, and not to conceal them. Just censure is to be encouraged, for the fear of blame is the best antidote against the poison of vice; and I love not that excess of goodness, that temper, flowing with milk and honey, that can whiten and sweeten a black and corrupt reputation. Let me repeat my request that you would write soon, and tell me when you keep your residence.

I am, dear Sir, &c. &c.

E. MONTAGU.

*To the Dutchess of Portland.**December the 5th, 1742.*

MADAM,

AFTER being sunk into stupidity by the company of a strange kind of animal called a country beau and wit, how unfit am I for the conversation of the Dutchess of Portland ! But it is your Grace only that can recover me from the lethargy I am fallen into, therefore, in the spirit of charity, allow me to take up my pen to write to you. When one has been some hours contemplating a human creature who cannot attain the perfection of a monkey, even the art of mimicry, how lowly does one esteem one's species ! Let me raise my opinion of them by dedicating the remainder of this evening to the conversation of one who is an honour to our kind. Had you seen the pains this animal has been taking to imitate the cringe of a beau, and the smartness of a wit, till he was hideous to behold, and horrible to hear, you would have pitied

him; he walks like a tortoise, and chatters like a magpye; by the indulgence of a kind mother, and the advantage of a country education, he was first a clown, then he was sent to the Inns of Court, where he first fell into a red waistcoat and velvet breeches; then into vanity: this light companion led him to the play-house, where he ostentatiously coquetted with the orange-wenches, who cured him of the bel-air of taking snuff, by abridging him of his nostrils. Grown even in his own eyes no very lovely figure, he thought Bacchus, no critic in faces, would prove in the end a better friend to him than Cupid; accordingly he fell into the company of the jovial; till want of money and want of taste led this prodigal son, if not to eat, to drink with swine; he visited the prisons, not as a comforter, but as a companion to the criminals; shook hands with the goldfinder, and walked in the ways of the scavenger; so singular his humility, none were his contempt. At last, having spent his money, ruined his constitution, and

lost all the little sense nature gave him, he returned to the country, where all the youths of inferior rank admiring his experience, and emulating his qualities, and copying his manners, grew, some fit for jail, others for transportation: those who went the least length, grew fit for nothing good. Notwithstanding all these vices, and the most nauseous effect of them, all people treat him civilly, and one gentleman in the neighbourhood is so fond of him, as, I believe, to spend a great deal of money, and most of his time, upon him. Alas! that hours, and days, and years, should be given to those who thus mis-spend them! While the learned die in the search of useful knowledge, the beneficent is made to cease his good works, the virtuous no longer allowed to set a good example, the righteous judge is cut off in the administration of justice, and the patriot falls while he is defending the liberty of his country; sure, these are the heirs of eternity; and then the longest life here is but a span, and may be lavished equally

on all, else, sure, this precious gift of time, by which may be purchased wisdom, honour, and renown, would not be lent to those who with no fair act have sanctified one day, have never wiped tears from the miserable, given comfort to a friend, or assistance to any one. But the ways of Providence are veiled from human sight; it is enough that by its visible works we see that all is dictated by unerring wisdom, and unexhaustible goodness; there let ever our proud questions end, and so sink our presumptuous enquiry. Mrs. Meadows \* has behaved in every thing greatly to her credit and my satisfaction; she is, I believe, unfeignedly glad of my present condition; for my part, I hope it is for the best, and that it will hereafter be a subject of happiness; but in all our addresses to Heaven, we should be earnest only in thanksgiving. Of what is past we only are the judge, blind and unknowing of what is to come. You

\* Mr. Montagu's sister, wife of Mr. afterwards Sir Sydney Meadows.

know my heart is unfit to bear the “slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,” and now she will find me vulnerable in the tenderest part, even maternal fondness. Without the dearest concerns, life has no interesting scenes for us; exempt from affections and duties, where can arise our merit and our happiness? Old age is in itself comfortless and joyless; hope ceases to promise when time has little more to give, so that unless our affections are kept living in those we love, for whom we may rejoice, enjoy, and hope, every agreeable sentiment is banished from the mind, regret seizes on our past lives, and pain and weariness possess the present time. Old age,

Last scene, that ends our strange, eventful story,

must seem a horrid period to an useless life; but if we are fortunate in our posterity, see our best virtues likely to bloom in them, and our fortunes flourish with them; our youth and life is lengthened to another generation. This thought will warm our hearts when the blood freezes



in our veins; hope and joy shall attend our latest hour; but if, instead of this, we bury comfort in the dear shape of our beloved children, great are the pangs indeed! I will not dwell upon this sad subject; but hope cannot come without doubt and fear in her train: that still I find joy corrected by a thousand gloomy apprehensions. Your Grace is singularly happy in your little ones; such amiable tempers, beautiful forms, and good constitutions, seem to promise all delight to you, and happy exulting pride; I hope they will answer your hopes as fairly as they promise them. Oh my friend!

May each domestic joy be thine,  
Be no unpleasing melancholy mine!

Your happiness will ever be an addition to mine. I hope I may this year enjoy your company with more freedom, than when the higher powers were to be consulted before I could have a room to myself. Mr. Montagu is too sincere and kind a friend not to rejoice at your friendship for me, which he knows is an honour and a hap-

piness to me. Letters are sent for: I can add no more.

I am, Madam, yours, &c. &c.

E. MONTAGU.

*To Mrs. Donnellan.*

*December the 5th, 1742.*

DEAR MADAM,

I AM sorry to find my dear friend has so little of health, the first and chiefest ingredient of happiness, that heavenly composition, so rarely to be met with on earth. I had designed to write to you as soon as I knew of your return from Twickenham, for while you continue ill I must renounce the pleasure of your letters, and content myself with hearing of you by Mr. Montagu. I am much obliged to you for your good wishes; it is supposing there is something better than mere tranquillity and ease of mind, to desire objects of so near concern and fondness: I know

not if it is according to the true estimate of human happiness, but it is agreeable to our common way of judging of it; we are not apt to wish to collect ourselves and our possessions into a very small compass; we ask for many blessings, though we are sensible the keeping them is precarious, and the parting with them grievous: impatient players at the game of fortune, but yet fond to get in our stakes! The exercise of every virtue that nature has implanted makes up the merit of humanity; many are made deaf to the calls of virtue by the storms of passion, or an indolence of mind; and the best may most triumph in their faculty of reflection, for by this is our happiness raised above brutes; they act always according to instinct, our greatest merit is only to do so too, but we are allowed to reflect on this rectitude of habit with joy and pride. We do best when we follow nature; they never deviate from its rules. If the stoic's pride, the philosopher's learning, or the hero's presumption, would lift them above humanity,

they are no more to be commended for their courses than the wild comet that runs blazing, with unconfined and unaccountable motion, through the vast universe; the learned will determine it to be out of its way, and describe its wandering journey, but it will raise superstition, error, and mistake, in the minds of the vulgar, who fondly pay greater worship to this wandering meteor, than to the right regulated planet: though every thing is really best moving in its own sphere, however bright and illustrious they seem out of it. I hope I shall find happiness in acquitting myself justly of the humble duties of a private family; I shall aspire to no higher character than that of a good woman. Those who endeavour to reconcile the good wife with the reputation of a beauty, a toast, a wit, and I know not what, have the art of bringing together things in their natures contrary. To be very serviceable to one's family, with spending only the hours of sleeping in it, may be above my art; my heart will always be open to my friends,

my house to the agreeable, and I will take a moderate share of diversion abroad ; but my attention is to my own fire-side, and this, I assure you, is merely my own inclination ; for though Mr. Montagu does every thing that can make my home agreeable, he has never by the least hint recommended to me to stay in it. Writing is in itself very uneasy to me ; I am often obliged to do more of it than is agreeable to my constitution, but I know, at this time, my friends are more attentive to my demonstrations of love to them, than before I changed my way of life ; but were my heart of such light inconstant stuff as to alter to my friends by any difference of situation, I should not think my affection a present worthy of Mr. Montagu's acceptance, and should rather settle it upon a toy-shop, than offer it to him. I expect Mr. Montagu here the latter end of this month, but he is obliged to wait for some law business, that he cannot come down as soon as the Parliament breaks up for the holidays. One finds great loss of a cheerful, agreeable

companion in a place as retired as this. I am afraid I should murmur at his absence even in our great and populous city; for that illustrious body, called the beau monde, cannot atone for the want of a sincere, kind friend. Gratitude and esteem attribute to one person, what one cannot find in a thousand; and those who seek true happiness in a crowd, seem ever seeking what they never find. If our spirit of love once gets out of the ark, like Noah's dove, it finds no resting-place; our family and friends are those from whom we must expect happiness, the rest is a raree-show; there is the representation of fine things indeed, but it is mere deceit; diverting and innocently amusing to those who look upon it as no other than what it is; but if, Don Quixote like, we dignify it with our fancy and chimera, there is both absurdity and danger in the mistake. Believe me, my dear Mrs. Donnellan, your sincere, faithful, and unalterable friend.

E. MONTAGU.

*To the Dutchess of Portland.*

Dec. 28, 1742.

MADAM,

I HAVE contrived that my letter shall lay in ambush for your Grace against your coming to town, that it may pay you compliments of congratulation upon the happy occasion of revisiting our charming metropolis, and, at the same time, give you the wishes of a happy new year; which, I hope, will bring to you new pleasures, and preserve to you all your already attained happiness. I have wrote to the ladies, and Lord Titchfield, to date myself their correspondent from the year 42-3; I mean for the young ladies; as for his Lordship, I think he will like Seneca's head and morals as well as my face and company, some twenty years hence; I have already a long pale face that affrights all the Cupidons, either with or without wings, equally terrible to those of the isle of Paphos, or the isle of Great Britain. But

no matter ; if I had Cupid's bow and quiver, in truth, not even for rhyme's sake, would I pierce either heart or liver ; Hymen, I hope has secured one heart to me, et un me suffit, and that one is nobly furnished with all virtues, and liberality and humanity to crown them. I suppose your Grace will see the owner of it when he returns to London ; at present, I guess he is in Berkshire. Mr. Montagu was to have come here this week, but the law's delay has kept him from her, whom except your Grace, you must know, I think the best wife in the world ; but pray take my opinion for it, for 'tis said man and wife are not always of one mind about any thing, and perhaps especially on this subject ; so pray inquire no farther, but have a catholic faith in my goodness, and implicitly believe all that my infallibility shall affirm about it. I expected to have heard last post, when Mr. Montagu would come to fetch me to your great city, but lo ! the terrible law, when it fastens its paw, does so confine people, that they may not



stir ; but he desires me to come to him ;  
 indeed, he says he will meet me, which  
 will fulfil the decorum ; for it would be  
 vast offence to prudery to pursue one of  
 that sex from which we ought to fly, as  
 say all mothers, grandmothers, and espe-  
 cially maiden aunts. However, next Sun-  
 day se'nnight I shall set out ; to my  
 inexpressible joy, I shall change the  
 whistling of the wind for the voice of  
 my friends and mirth ; oh, blest vicissi-  
 tude ! I had rather live in Æolus's den  
 than in the country at this time of the  
 year without the voice of, at least, ten  
 people, of which one talks and nine laugh,  
 for a small family is not sufficient to drown  
 this hollow wind. Dr. Sandys says I may  
 travel, and he speaks like a Solomon ; I  
 shall move as slowly as a fat corpse in a  
 hearse ; but the coach making a progress  
 still forward, I shall at length get to my  
 journey's end. Your Grace asks me if I  
 have left off footing, and tumbling down  
 stairs ; as to the first, my fidgetations are  
 much spoiled ; sometimes I have cut a  
 thoughtless caper, which has gone to the

heart of an old steward of Mr. Montagu's, who is as honest as Trusty in the play of *Grief à la Mode*. I am told he has never heard a hop that he has not echoed with a groan. I have taken such heed to my goings I have not gone down stairs more than by gradual degrees. I hope you have found all your friends well; I reckon they will gather together about you as soon as you get into your house. I wish I could make one of the happy assembly; after a sober journey of ten tedious days I may get to town. At your Grace's desire I have read Mr. Hervey; I think he has some very good thoughts; but there is, in my opinion, a great deal of absurdity, with now and then apparent nonsense. He says some pretty things on friendship, but the subject is worthy the tongue of angels, or angel-like mortals; there must be a mind of more steadiness and harmony than his to comprehend it. Solomon, I think says the best things on friendship. Friendship is the glory of humanity; the philosopher speaks of it with pride, and the powerful with osten-

tation, but its true kingdom is founded in the heart that is free from the low vices of avarice and luxury, or the high ones of ambition and glory ; for it is often sacrificed to mean ends or great desires. The man who, I think, best heard its voice amidst the tumults of a public life, was Cicero. I have known people boast of firmness in bearing the loss of friends, that would have fretted at being robbed of ten pounds. Swift says very well, that he never knew any man who could not bear another's misfortunes perfectly like a Christian ; and, indeed, I have seldom known fortitude, or even the word made use of, but in regard to those misfortunes that did not touch the person. Many are calm spectators of another's woe ; few resigned sufferers of their own. I fear your Grace will find poor Mrs. Donnellan in a bad state of health ; I wish to see her, and yet I am afraid her illness will damp the joy of our meeting. What you say of conversation is a melancholy truth ; if it was not for the redundant impertinence of foolish people, and

the pragmatistical dryness of some sensible ones, I should think the gift of speech a much greater ornament to humanity ; as for fools, it is a sin for sensible people to keep company with them, the very worst offence, sin against oneself ; they are unsafe, unpleasant, and unprofitable company. I never knew any ass but Balaam's, that either spoke truth, or gave good advice ; they do not intend to deceive, but they have the misfortune to be ever mistaken, which is equally pernicious to those with whom they converse. Their conversation tends only to encourage one's prejudices and errors ; but conversation is a nice composition, flattery is hurtful, reproof painful. A true reasonable companion is a valuable and rare blessing ; by their opinion one may reform one's faults without smarting for them. With the flatterer one grows ostentatious, and with the censurer reserved ; the friend that is

To all one's virtues very kind,  
To all one's faults a little blind,

cherishes the first, and gently mends the

other ; but I must take my leave ; I have the clock's admonition for it ; while it struck out the quarters, I could bear its warning, but now growing peremptory, like an importune adviser, I hate its voice

I am, Madam,  
your Grace's, &c. &c. &c.  
E. MONTAGU.

*To the Same.*

*Dover-street, 12 July, 1743.*

MADAM,

YOU desire much of my thoughts, and many of my words ; as for the first, I cannot help their rambling after your Grace, and of the latter you know I am not retentive. All the gift of tongues, bestowed on mankind, are retired to Mr. Finch's, in Saville-row ; the general voice lives there in the person of the Countess of Granville. I went there with Mrs. Meadows on Sunday, and, lo ! we found

whispering in her ear either Mrs. P—— M——, or envy and scandal in her shape ; she vanished at our entrance, but her spirit thundered from the mouth of the ancient oracle ; she fell with all her violence on my complexion, and behold she certainly, by her description, takes my forehead to be tortoise-shell, my cheeks to be gold, my eyes to be onyx, and my teeth amber ; all these are precious things, but Mr. Montagu not having so rich a fancy as King Midas, I know not whether he would like such a wife. Your Grace may believe I was extremely mortified. The good woman says, Mrs. Meadows looks better and younger for being married ; but for me, I am pale and green, and describes me as worse than the apothecary that lives about the rendezvous of death, in Caius Marius. She is of opinion that lying in has spoiled my face ; true it is I have furnished a noble pair of chops to the little boy, and if mine are a little the lanker for it I scarce grudge it. I wish your Grace had been present ; we

had many good scenes, but the scene of tenderness and sorrow was the best of all ; she sighed, and tossed, and thumped, and talked, and blamed, and praised, and hoped, and used the greatest variety of expression, and suffered the greatest change of temper, that ever poor soul did ; most pathetically did she break out, giving an account of Lady Carteret's death ! “ Poor dear Lady Carteret got her death going abroad with a cold ; for if poor dear Lady Carteret had a fault—not that I know that poor dear Lady Carteret had a fault—nay, I believe, poor dear Lady Carteret had not a fault—but, if she had a fault, it was that she loved to dress and go out too well—you know poor dear Lady Carteret did love to dress and go out ; and then you know she never spared herself : she would talk, always talk—but it was to be so, it was ordained that she should die abroad.” All this, yea, and much more, more than mortal memory can register, did she utter in a breath. Had her eloquence had one happy

interval for me to have made my honours and escaped, how blest had I been ! but as Mirabell says of Lady Wishfor't, echo must wait till she dies, to catch her last word. I was forced to leave her in the midst of her chat, but I shall resume the thread of her discourse next winter, for, I dare say, it will run on as long as the fatal sisters spin the thread of her life. She asked after your Grace, and gave a very cordial and friendly hum and thump of satisfaction upon hearing you was well. The old woman shewed a love for Miss Carteret, which makes me think she has more goodness than people suspect her of. I shall return to the shades next week. I am much obliged to you for your kind enquiry after the young Fidget, who loves laughing and dancing, and is worthy of the mother he sprang from ; thank God, he is very well, and I am reasonable enough to think so. As for Mrs. Donnellan she is well, Mrs. Delany is better than well. Lady Wallingford came to town on Friday ; I have seen her only according to Peter's phrase in the



Drummer, in the shape of the sound of a message.

I am, Madam,  
most gratefully, and affectionately, your  
Grace's obliged and devoted

E. MONTAGU.

*To the Same.*

*Sandleford, near Newbury, 1743.*

MADAM,

IF I was as good a poet as Boileau I would complain of l'embarras de Londres, and also of l'embarras de la campagne, and of the still greater embarras of travelling from one place to the other. When I had the happiness of your letter I was so encompassed with boxes, trunks, portmanteaus, and even the lesser plague, of band-boxes, that I could not give myself the pleasure of writing to your Grace. Bag and baggage we arrived here on Thursday night; first marched

the child crying, nurse singing, and the Abigails talking; Mr. Montagu, my sister, and myself, brought up the rear. We had fine weather and a pleasant journey; we took a boat from the inn at Maidenhead-bridge, and rowed round his Grace of Marlborough's island. I had the pleasure of reflecting on the agreeable morning I had spent there with you. I sacrificed a gentle sigh to the manes of the departed day, but thanked the gentle Fates that spun it so fine, though, like coarser clue, it is now wound up on the common bottom of departed time, which may not again be unravelled. The sylvan deities, the jolly Pan, and the bounteous Ceres, are affrighted from the island by some terrible cannon planted on the borders of it; sad symptoms of the iron age! The halcyon bird did thereupon take his flight, and the portentous raven lives in that sweet bird's forsaken nest; and, since the violation of the silence of this island, Astrea has never ventured so near the court and city. The walnut-trees still thrive, and grow full as fast as the

laurels. I think Fame does not, at either end of her trumpet, proclaim the deeds of the heroes abroad. I am of your Grace's opinion, that the rumours of war are terrible; the ambition of the mighty, which "cries havock, and lets slip the dogs of war" upon mankind, is surely greatly sinful. Are we not subject to too many diseases, calamities, and kinds of death by nature but we must tear each other to pieces, and deal about the arrows of destruction? Oh! that we would keep the covenant of the just, that it might be well with the children of men. I could wish that you had perfect health without interruption, but these colds are bad things. Dr. Courayer dined with us the day before we left town; he was more elated with having a letter from you than he had been dejected with the overthrow of the French; he looks well, and his mind always seems the seat of tranquillity. Donnellan promises to come down here soon; I hope she will stay till I go to London to be inoculated. I am sorry for what you tell me of Lady

Wallingford ; I fear she is in a very ill state of health. Mrs. Meadows has promised to take the child while I am sick, and I am best satisfied that it be with her, for I am sure she will take great care of it ; and, thank God ! it is a very strong healthy child ; indeed were he otherwise I should not leave him, for, I think, when they are sickly no one can be tender enough for them but a parent, who feels their little woes, and endeavours to redress them as if they were their own afflictions. Nature gives better lessons to the heart than reflection can, and nature is always in earnest ; reason and duty have but their turns. Exalted and refined sentiments do sometimes great things, but natural affection is always present, and therefore the life of the parent is always of infinite consequence to the infant, since no one can take the place of a mother ; the tenderness that lives in her, must die with her. Boys, indeed, have soon enough of us, for with the manly habit they often put on a manly contempt of womankind, and at three years old are

frequently ashamed of that ensign of our order, a fan ; but a drum, more noisy and empty, they honour as a folly of their own kind, and for what I know, as king-errantry is coming into fashion, it may be the glorious bagatelle of the world ; but for us poor women, life will be all a farce and all a ladle still, for I think L dy Carteret's ill success in following the big wars will deter other ladies from adventures abroad. Mrs. B—— is a very good woman, and has excellent sense and wit ; but a cast of particularity, with a want of softness in her manners, robs her of the good opinion she would otherwise gain. It is of great consequence to a woman to keep off all disagreeable manners, for the world does not mind our intrinsic worth so much as the fashion of us, and will not easily forgive our not pleasing. The men suffer for their levity in this case, for in a woman's education little but outward accomplishment is regarded. Some of our sex have an affectation of goodness, others a contempt of it from their education ; but the many

good women there are in the world are merely so from nature ; and, I think, it is much to the honour of untaught human nature, that women are so valuable for their merit and sense. Sure the men are very imprudent to endeavour to make fools of those to whom they so much trust their honour, happiness, and fortune ; but it is the nature of mankind to hazard their peace to secure their power ; and they know fools make the best slaves. I will write a very very serious, formal letter, as your Grace orders, next post.

I am, Madam,  
your Grace's most obliged, and obedient,  
E. MONTAGU.

*To the Same.*

\* *Sandleford*, 1743.

I SHOULD have wrote to your Grace before this time if I could have found time

\* *Sandleford* was a priory for Austin canons founded in the year 1200, by Geoffrey Earl of Perche, and Maud his wife.

for a long letter, or resolution for a short one, but both were out of my power; this very hour was appointed by the Fates, and this very sheet of paper, no doubt, cut by them for the purpose. I did not leave London so soon as I proposed by a day; my brother came to town on purpose to make us a visit, and we put off our journey till Tuesday, on that account. I had a very pleasant journey to this place, where I am much delighted to find every thing that is capable of making retirement agreeable; the garden commands a fine prospect, the most cheerful I ever saw, and not of that distance which is only to gratify the pride of seeing, but such as falls within the humble reach of my eyes. We have a pretty village on a rising ground just before us,

Where the cottage chimney smokes,  
Fast betwixt two aged oaks.

Poverty is there clad in its decent garb of low simplicity, but her tattered robes of misery do not here show want and wretchedness; you would rather imagine

pomp was neglected than sufficiency wanted. A silver stream washes the foot of the village; health, pleasure, and refreshment are the ingredients that qualify this spring; no debauch or intoxication, arises from its source. Nature has been very indulgent to this country, and has given it enough of wood and water; the first we have here in good plenty, and a power of having more of the latter, as improvements are undertaken. Here are great temptations to riding and walking. I go out every evening to take a view of the country; the villages are the neatest I ever saw; every cottage is tight, has a little garden, and is sheltered by fine trees.

Just here was I interrupted by a parson, his wife, and daughter; and I shall not be reconciled to prunello and grogram again a great while; they have robbed me of those hours I could have dedicated to your Grace. The post goes from hence at two o'clock, it is now past twelve; we are to dine at Mr. Warren's, so I must finish my letter. Oh, sacred



leisure! whither art thou retired, since the shades hold thee not? Shall impertinence pierce the sacred recess of the woods dedicated to silence and contemplation? What oracles shall the hallowed oak deliver now every magpie perches and chatters there? I hoped to have passed some days far from the busy hum of men, but society has found me out, and even papers containing rumours of war, with all its pomp, its pride, and circumstance. I know your Grace is glad we have conquered, but while the sun of glory sets in blood I do not desire its beams to shine on us; commerce is our friend.—But I must put an end to my letter. I hope you had a pleasant journey to Welbeck, and that your Grace and all are well.

I am, Madam,  
your Grace's most devoted,

E. M.

*To the Same.*

*Sandleford, 6th of July.*

MADAM,

I HAVE often taken up my pen and dipped it in ink, and prepared to dedicate and address its labours to your Grace, and have as often been prevented; and the tide of ink has either been stopped by some accident or turned from its proper channel to rush through letters of business, or flow in compliments and congratulations, for of all these I have had many to write lately. Then, Madam, we farmers and housewives have many little cares: a black cloud that threatens the hay, a clap of thunder that may spoil the cream, an east wind that brings blast to our grain, can all darken the imagination, and spoil the conceits of the children of care. I hope your Grace received a great deal of pleasure at Sevenoaks, and found and left your friend in good health. I was unlucky to leave

town the day before you returned to it, but so the perverse Fates decreed. Mrs. Donnellan and I had some adventures at the inn, which I think deserve relation ; we had spent the fire of our conversation, and were in serious, sober, and deliberate discourse, when Mrs. Ann Walton, who was at the inn, (with the late Mrs. W——, now Mrs. H——, ) rushed into the room, let off a volley of compliments on our happy rencontre, expressed a desire to inform us of the pomps and vanities of Mrs. H——'s wedding, the number and richness of her clothes, the quantity, lustre, and form of her jewels ; with a most comprehensive *et cætera* of equipage, servants, plumb-cake feasts, and so on. The benevolent communicativeness of her temper, urged her on to describe this with such impetuous speed, such earnest violence, and uninterrupted force, that poor Donn and I could hardly insert a note of admiration ; the most we could possibly introduce was Ah ! While this vocal music was playing the thorough bass, the door again opened, and let in

Mrs. Hassel, the late Lord Stawel's, daughter : she came (as says the poet),

Like light'ning through a cloud,  
Shining bright, and speaking loud,

and with a voice more audible, and discourse more voluble, than the other, went on without interruption, pause, or delay, till Mrs. H——— summoned her to play at commerce. Now for a simile to describe the silence and dulness that appeared on their departure ; the blowing off of a whirlwind, the ceasing of thunder, a storm of hail going off in a soft shower, even a conjuror running away with one corner of a house, and leaving the inhabitants of the other in dumb astonishment and silent fear, are poor emblems, and faint comparisons, of the change that appeared in the room at our inn. We were so amazed and confounded, we stared at each other, and asked whether they were “ spirits blest, or goblins damn'd ; ” wished we had spoken to them ; inquired whether they vanished at the crowing of the cock, or the calling of the drawer.

At last hearing it was something that had had two husbands, we determined it must be flesh and blood, grew more easy, and drank our tea. I don't know whether your Grace knows the history of Mrs. Hassel; she was handsome and very rich, and married first to a fugitive Papist priest, who dying, she lamented for him so violently, that her grief was soon worn out, and she married a Major Hassel. Mrs. W—— too dispatched her sorrow in a reasonable time, and as soon as she had pulled off the widow's veil and weeds, put on her bridal garments, and is now gone into Yorkshire with her new husband. Don Quixote could not have devised a better adventure than the meeting these extraordinary persons, in such extraordinary spirits, on so extraordinary an occasion. I think my ancestor, surnamed Crusoe, voyaged through lands unknown to less purpose than I passed through the turnpike road to Newbury. As nothing suspends the faculties like astonishment, this great amazement so entirely subdued my small capacity, that I have stared without seeing,

listened without understanding, and spoke without meaning ever since ; this, though not improbable, your Grace may be loth to believe ; but as arguments are best illustrated by an example, I will give you a very extraordinary one, and which will entirely convince you of the truth of what I advanced. A few days ago I carried Mrs. Donnellan and the little Pere, to see Mr. Sloper's gardens and house, at a time when I was assured he was absent on his election ; but seeing a man ride up the avenue at the same time, I took it into my head it might be Mr. Sloper, so I did not alight immediately. The housekeeper came to me, and asked if I would walk in ; I said I should be glad to see the house if *Mr. Cibber* \* was not at home ; the housekeeper looked aghast, as if she had spoiled a custard, or broke a jelly glass ; I coloured, Mrs. Donnellan twittered, Dr.

\* Mr. Sloper's connection with Mrs. Cibber the actress is well known, as well as the conduct of Theophilus Cibber, her husband, his shameful connivance, and subsequent prosecution for damages.

Courayer sputtered half French half English, and began to search for the case of a spying glass I had dropt in my fright. As my organs of speech, rather than of sight, seemed defective, I was little interested for my perspective, but sat in the coach making melancholy reflections on my mistake. Mrs. Donnellan could not compose her countenance, so that we were near a quarter of an hour before we got out of the coach; and after so long a pause I walked into the house greatly abashed. However, in the midst of my concern it gave me some consolation that I could procure your Grace a very salutary and happy fit of laughing, of which I wish you the full benefit and pleasure. If I was not afraid of fatiguing you, I believe I could shake your spleen with a description of Dr. Courayer's figure, when he arrived here from Oxford, through a whole day's rain; but let it suffice that he shone with drops of water like the diamond ficoides. How his beaver was slouched, his coloured handkerchief twisted, and his small boots

stuck to his small legs ; how the rain had uncurled his wig, the spleen dejected his countenance, the cramp spoiled his gait, I shall not describe ; having set you a laughing at myself, it would look like a churlish pride, or *mauvaise-honte*, if I should divert you to any other subject. Mrs. Donnellan and Dr. Courayer join in desiring their best respects and compliments, to your Grace. I hope my Lord Duke, and Mr. Achard, will accept of mine ; and I desire that when you are disposed to laugh at any absurdity, you will not forget mine, who am serious and wise in nothing but in being your Grace's most devoted, sincere, and affectionate humble servant,

E. MONTAGU.



*To the Same.*

*The 2d of Aug.*

MADAM,

I CANNOT tell what motive of curiosity might carry my letter round the world ; but had it partaken of the inclinations of its writer, it would have made the best of its way to Bullstrode. I began to be very uneasy at not hearing from your Grace, and formed many fears, which haunted me in ugly shapes, till your letter put them to flight. I told the little Pere \* that you accused him of laziness, and he promises amendment and a letter ; he has, I presume, tasted of severer penance than writing to a fair and amiable Dutchess ; and, I think, if such are our corrections for his sins, he cannot but be a zealous convert to the church of England. Your Grace owns that you laughed at my blunder about Mr. Cibber, but you do not say that you pitied the confusion that followed it. To have seen

\* Courayer.

how I started and how I blushed, might have moved pity, I should have thought, in the hardest heart ; but though I have told the story, with all its melancholy circumstances, to many charitable and well disposed Christians, I have not seen the least symptom of compassion in them, but many signs of mirth, and unmerciful laughter. Yesterday we went to see a very extraordinary place : a gentleman has built a house on the summit of a prodigious hill, where there is not a drop of water, nor a stick of wood ; he has planted some fir-trees, which are watered every day by carts, that bring the water about three miles ; he has sunk a well to the centre of the earth, from whence some laborious horses draw him as much water as may wash his face, or, in a liberal hour, supply his tea-kettle ; the wind plays about his house in so riotous a manner, that a person must poise themselves in a very exact manner to maintain their ground, and walk on two legs, with an erect countenance, as it is the glory and pride of human nature to do. I dare

say the next generation there, if they are not of an obstinate temper, will walk on all four. The soil in this place is so barren that there is hardly a blade of grass to be seen ; and the poor sheep that wander about must change their vegetable for animal food, devour each other, and dine on mutton like their betters. The first house this gentleman built was in a bottom, where the ground was all wet and marshy, overgrown with willows and alders, and extremely peopled with frogs ; there he found himself ill at ease, and no doubt but in time, would have died of a dropsy, as I now fear he will be destroyed by the wind cholic. But, in the mean time, I wish he may do something for the good of mankind, and make use of his situation, so adapted thereto, in improving weather-cocks and windmills. A few days ago we were at Miss Lisle's wood and grotto, the work of nine sisters, who in disposition, as well as number, bear some resemblance to the Muses.

On Monday we think of going to Lady

Fane's grotto, at Basildon, of which I will give your Grace the best account I can. One who bears so true a respect to every individual shell, cannot but truly venerate a number of them happily met together, and therefore I will give your Grace a particular description of them ; I mean of their appearance ; as to their names, unless I had their godfather Shaw with me, I shall not be able to tell them. Mrs. Donnellan and I are going to make a shell frame for a looking-glass ; I think a looking-glass to be properest for the first work, as every body will be sure to find something they like in it ; indeed I should be afraid of showing this piece of work to you, who forget and neglect yourself to give attention to any thing else ; but I do not so fear your criticism as not to wish you were to dress your head in it ; and must I never hope for the happiness of seeing your Grace here ! Let me have a promise under your hand for next summer.

I am,

ever your Grace's most devoted,

E. MONTAGU.

*To the Same.*

1743.

MADAM,

I AM pleased to think this letter will find your Grace in the regions of liberty and pleasure, free from all the chains and shackles of ceremony and constraint. To have our actions regulated by little precise forms, and our words turned to the tune of other people's opinions, takes away all the comfort of life. All inquisition into a person's actions or opinions, more than they choose to declare, is of a very tyrannous nature; and a peevish opposition to the opinions they do declare, is very opposite to the end of conversation. It is from this reason there is little charity among different sects; we are not angry that our neighbour is in the wrong, but that he thinks us so. Were the liberty to dissent allowed without mark or notice, we should scarce know there was any difference of opinion among men. It would be very ridiculous if all

the squinting people in the world were to profess enmity to the rest of the world, or be treated as enemies, because they cannot make their eyes meet on the same point. that others, not liable to that infirmity, do. If we direct our steps aright, why should we quarrel about the landmarks that direct us? Peace on earth, and good will towards men, was the wish of Divine benevolence ; would we endeavour to follow it, how happy would be every private family in their little system, and how much so the world in general ! But it is so much the custom amongst us to plague each other, that were it not for some particular friendships, where the desire to oblige and make easy is prevalent, and the foundation of the happy commerce and union, this life would be a warfare none but the contentious could maintain. I was in hopes to have heard when you would come to town ; I wish you may come up to us soon after the twenty-fourth of this month, which is the time I propose for going to London for the inoculation. I

think there is no danger of hot weather after the middle of September ; Dr. Mead says it is the best time for me ; so, I hope, nothing will prevent my being in town as I propose. It would be an inexpressible joy to me to meet you there. I will write to Lady Andover so long a letter she shall have the fear of my pen before her eyes as long as she lives. Matlock must be well worth seeing ; we have nothing here of the wild and uncultivated sort. I intend to go and indulge reveries at an old castle, where Chaucer made his fairies gambol with as much grace and prettiness as the Muses of old on the hill of Parnassus : the castle is on a rising, just above Newbury, and commands a pretty view of the country. The prospect is of sufficient extent to let the poetic fancy rove at pleasure among the beauties of nature. Pray where is Pen ? Will she produce a sprig of bays ? It must be a little Master Apollo, or a Miss Minerva, from parents of such art and science. I have sent your Grace a copy of a letter Lord Orford sent to General Churchill ;

if ever he was to be envied it was when he wrote that letter. It seems to come from a mind pleased with every thing about it, and easy in itself amidst the refinements of luxury and expence, without the madness of intemperance, or inconveniences of prodigality; but, with all his elegance, I do not think he shews true taste, as a lover and friend of human kind, who has sacrificed his vanity, and subjected his avarice to the public good. The sweetest music is well deserved praise and an untainted heart the best possession, and to live in the esteem of good people is the fairest abode. All the adornments of vice are but like the pomp and state of a funeral; the shew pleases for a minute, till we remember it is only celebrating the misery and misfortune of human kind, and hiding under pomp the corruption of our fellow-creature. I hope this letter will find you well, and the dear little ones safe, at Bullstrode; these little creatures add to our care; but how unhappy are they who have nothing worth caring for! My little boy will cost me



a sigh at parting; it is a great pleasure to me to see him gathering strength every day, and I hope making a provision of health for years to come.

I am,  
my dearest Lady Dutchess's  
very affectionate, and sincere friend, and  
grateful humble servant,

E. MONTAGU.

\* \* \* Mrs. Montagu was innoculated this year without success.

*To the Same.*

Dec. 8, 1743.

MADAM,

I MAY now wish your Grace joy of my Lord Duke's recovery, which indeed has been happy to the greatest degree after so bad an accident. You have put me into a sufficient fright about Mrs. Delany; \* by what you say, I suspect I di-

\* Mrs. Pendarvis married Dr. Delany, the friend of Swift, 9th of June, 1743.

rected my letter to Mrs. Pendarvis. I think myself the more capable of it, because, at Allerthorpe, when I wrote to acquaint my mother I could not take a journey to town because I was breeding, I signed myself Robinson, though really, while I wore that name, I do not remember I was ever in the like condition. I cannot tell what to say to Mrs. Delany about this mistake. I am sure I approved the match; and consented with my whole heart, but for this slip of the pen I cannot account; perhaps it might happen from the fright I was in for the Duke; I am sure Mr. Drummond could not be in a greater fright when he saw all the Hanoverians in a panic. I want to know whether the Secretary confessed his sins in his fear; for if a fright can make a minister forget his hypocrisy, well may it make me forget a name. I hope you found Lady Oxford well at Salt Hill. I sigh, whenever I pass by Slough to think of the days I have seen. I find the power of Bullstrode mighty still, and ever grieve to think I

pass by it without calling. I hear her Grace of Kent did me the honour to ask a great many civil questions after me of Mrs. Meadows. I design to go to visit the old dragon as soon as I come to town. I am afraid Mr. Montagu's continuing to vote against the ministry will hurt my complexion as bad as another lying in. I have been petrifying my brains over a most solid and ponderous performance of a woman in this neighbourhood. Having always a love to see Phœbus in petticoats, I borrowed a book, written by an ancient gentlewoman skilled in Latin, dipt in Greek, and absorbed in Hebrew, besides a modern gift of tongues. By this learned person's instruction was Dr. Pocock (her son) skilled in antique lore, while other people are learning to spell monosyllables. But Hebrew being the mother tongue, you know, it is no wonder he learnt it. His gingerbread was marked with Greek characters, and his bread and butter, instead of glass windows, was printed with Arabic. He had a mummy for his jointed baby, and a little

pyramid for his play-house. His copy-book was filled with hieroglyphics; and nothing modern and vulgar could be employed in the education of this learned woman's son. Mrs. Pocock lives in a village very near us, but has not visited here, so I have not had an opportunity to observe her conversation; but really I believe she is a good woman, though but an indifferent author. She amuses herself in the country so as to be chearful and sociable at threescore, is always employed either in reading, working, or walking; and I do not hear that she is pedantic. What use she makes of her Hebrew, I cannot tell; but it is a strange piece, not of female, but of male curiosity, to learn it. I am told she always carries a Greek or Hebrew bible to church. I desire your Grace to make ten thousand apologies for me to Mrs. Delany, if it is really true that I would have robbed her of a good name; but I hope you only said this to put me in terrors. I desire my best compliments to her and Dr. Delany, to whom I wish very well, though I have

offered the shadow of a great injury in seeming to deprive them of each other. I send my friendly love to dear Donnellan, my sincere good wishes to my Lord Duke for recovering his mischief, and to the little ones that they keep free from all harm. I congratulate Mr. Achard upon the Duke's recovery, and to Mr. Drummond I wish a perseverance in mirth, wit, and good humour. I am ever your Grace's most devoted

E. M.

*To Mrs. Donnellan.*

*Sandleford, December 15, 1743.*

DEAR FRIEND,

YOUR letters always give me great pleasure; and in my resolution of not writing, the Dutchess of Portland and you are excepted. It is indeed sincerely true that the posture does not agree with me, and, as true, that I am tired of leading

the life of a scribbler, for in much writing there is some trouble and no improvement. You are very kind in your concern for my health; I am now better; I have not suffered much, though my nerves have sometimes played their leger-de-main with me; but their dark magic, working upon the mind, has not yet encircled me. I have as few fears as most people; nor has my heart any sorrows real or imaginary. I have spent my time, during the last fortnight, not much to my mind; I am not one of those choice exalted spirits that want no assistance from society; it is my infirmity that I cannot live without an agreeable companion, and my misfortune to find in few people the qualities that please me. Morose could not be more miserable at a puppet show, or a ballad opera, than I am in some company; so that I frequently cannot avoid solitude without falling into worse punishment. I can bear twenty disagreeable people at a time, but sicken at a tête-à-tête with one whom I dislike. I expect my brother Morris here on the

20th, my sister on the 23d, with Mrs. Cotes, and Mr. and Mrs. Freind, whom, to my great grief I shall not be able to keep long. Mr. Montagu hopes to come here the end of this week; but I fear he may not be spared from his attendance on the House. The papers say his wisdom, squire S——, is made a peer; he will surely be as genteel a man of quality as he is an able minister; and Madam D——, with her cares of the nation, will make an admirable Countess; she is genteel enough for a lady of the bedchamber to Huncamunca, or the boisterous queen of the Philistines. I wish much I could see her presented at court for this new honour. I thought Fortune had raised his Wisdom for the jest of a day, but I find the joke is to last longer. In ancient times people were made great because they had served their country, now they become so by hurting it. I wish I had one half of you here; I would not take all of you from so agreeable a society as you are in, but I hope we shall get a quiet season in the country together. I have laid

your kiss upon a rosy cheek ; the little man is very well, and thanks you for your present ; he will do as much for you when he is bigger.

I am, dear Madam,  
most affectionately your's,

E. M.

*To the Rev. Mr. Freind.*

*March the 3d, 1741.*

MOST EXCELLENT COUSINS,

L'EMBARRAS DE LONDRES is such it really leaves one no leisure for any thing right, reasonable, friendly, and comfortable ; all that Boileau says in rhyme against l'embarras de Paris I think, in plain prose, of this troublesome town ; but the poets have a great advantage over poor prose mortals ; a strong expression or a bold metaphor is with us harsh and rude ; prose satire seems abusive, and a complaint is called scolding ; while, in rhyme, the



poet sings so sweetly we are soothed with his dumps, instructed by his chiding, and half pleased with his abuse. We got to Dover-street on Monday before it was dark, though we did not set out from Sandleford till after seven. As soon as Aurora, with her rosy fingers, unbarred the gates of light, so soon, and no sooner, did Betty, the lean maid, unbar our wooden shutter, and undraw our camblet window curtain, with her red hands, chopt with the work of many a well washed day. But, after we had shaken off sleep, it was no such easy matter to part with little Punch, with whom we played and pleased ourselves as long as we could afford time, then went to Reading, and there took a post chaise, like bold demoiselles errantes. The boy blew the horn, and away we went with some signs of importance, our haste signifying we were people much wanted somewhere, and who had no time to throw away. Fortune, who favours the bravery of men, looked enviously at our female courage ; and, perhaps, alarmed to see wheels that

turned faster than her own, did very uncivilly lay some stumbling block in the way of one of our chaise horses ; down he fell, prostrate in the dust ; the ladies errant dismounted ; a mob gathered round them ; however, the untaught multitude pitied and assisted them ; in the mean time drove by a coach of polite people, who had not the humanity to ask what assistance was wanted ; however, we got into our chaise, and away we went with great spirit. At Hounslow our own chaise and horses met us. We were not sorry, at the end of our journey, to get into an easy vehicle ; much we rejoiced at its pleasanter motion ; when our coachman, inspired with pride, by which cometh contention, and by contention disaster, runs a race with a coach and four, and overturns us ; so, I must tell you, having no Voiture to say it for me, nous nous trouvons toujours sur nos pieds, and accordingly found ourselves no worse, but, after all adventures, were brought safe to our good friend in Dover-street, where we forgot all evils and accidents ;

for, as Sir W. Temple says, whom I am just reading, and therefore happen to remember, a friend is the medicine of life. And now I am sitting in my easy chair with that ease and dignity one feels after remembrance of high achievements and great fatigues. Mr. Montagu had proposed coming to us on the Saturday, finding nothing of consequence was coming on in the Parliament-house, but my letter informing him of our design of being in London on Monday, that my sister might be ready to go down with my father, made him defer his journey. We shall take the first opportunity of going down to the little man when there is nothing of importance going forward in the Parliament-house. We were very impatient for your letter, having a thousand fears for Mrs. Freind, and great anxiety about your children. Your letter I delivered to the amiable Dutchess; she was much pleased with it, and, I assure you, she thinks of you as you deserve. How came Mrs. Freind to be taken for a parrot? she has less of the parrot than

any woman in the world ; a parrot is the very reverse of her character ; but I assure you I know a great many parrots ; I met four, in a visit yesterday, with an ancient magpie for their chaperon. You wonder I say nothing of public news perhaps ; but we are all gaping with curiosity, and there is no intelligence to inform us, nor invention to amuse us ; there has not even been a false rumour these three days ; one would think truth and discretion prevailed, but those who have the happiness of keeping a great deal of good company know the contrary. I am glad our coach-horses performed your journey well ; I hope every thing that belongs, in any manner, to me, is at the service of my friends. I cannot take to myself any praise for asking for the company I much esteem, nor for taking all the care in my power of one I love and value like my cousin Grace. I thought my sister must have gone to Horton on Monday, but we have a reprieve for a few days, I fear for less than

a week ; she is now at the play. We were at the ridotto on Thursday ; it was very disagreeable ; every individual was dull, and altogether they were troublesome ; while I was gaping and yawning, I heard people crying “ This is a charming ridotto ! ” A disposition to be pleased is a great happiness. I wish I had more pleasure in a crowd for fear I should grow too retired ; when fancy loses a pleasurable toy, it is well if reason substitutes something of more solid contentment in its place ; but really the world affords little enough of happiness, even if we take the serious and comic into the account. I believe the domestic happiness I enjoy makes me indifferent to the trifles abroad, which can bear no comparison with the pleasure and felicity of living with those one loves and esteems ; and for amusement, no puppet-show is like the pleasant humours of my own punch at Sandleford. I hope my god-daughter will get quite rid of her complaints ; many have fits at her age, and get well through

them. I am your's and my dear cousin's most obedient servant, and most sincere friend,

E. MONTAGU.

*To the Same.*

*Dover-strect, the 14th of March, 1744.*

MOST EXCELLENT COUSIN,

IT is a terrible thing to be self-convicted. I am so sensible I am in the wrong, that I think it presumption to imagine an apology can do me any service, so take the truth as it is. I have been a little idle, and a great deal out of health. I was so pestered with a cough I could not write, nor do any thing, but loll in an easy chair. No sooner was I able to stir out, but looking in that roll of courtesy, called a visiting-book, I found myself such a debtor to ceremony it was the business of my life to get clear of those obligations: and cards fly about that,

like the leaves of the Sibyls of old, prescribe the actions, and mark the fate of every day. I was summoned to a drum at Mrs. Manwaring's, where I saw my cousin, Septimus Robinson,\* dressed as gay as a lover; but whether that was the footing he was upon I do not know. I am ashamed I did not acknowledge the receipt of the Bath water; my mother thinks her soul in peril of purgatory till she has paid for it; for charity's sake make her easy upon that head; and that I may have a comfortable conscience also, be so good as to pay Miss Grinfield for two feather tippets she bought for me. The Dutchess of Portland would have taken it ill if you had not wrote to her. She communicated your last letter to me, and seemed much pleased with it. We never cease to make honourable mention of you. I wish I knew what people at Bath expect and desire to hear from their friends in London; would you hear news, politics, scandal, or what? Suppose I

\* Afterwards Sir Septimus Robinson, Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod.

blend them together, and give you political-censorious news; I think that must please all palates; there are few who have not some relish of either novelty, business, or satire; the first will please the young, whose passion is curiosity, and their delight surprize; the second suits the middle-aged, who are engaged very deeply in wordly pursuits; the third will best amuse those who have found the sin and vanity that waits on business and pleasure. After all my promises of such variety, I do not know how to pick up one article of either news, politics, or scandal. The malecontents, and enemies of the constitution, agree we have the best regulated *ridottos* in Europe; those who do not honour K—— G——, admire King Lear; and however they may disapprove Lord Granvill, they declare Garrick to be an incomparable actor. Some who think the exchequer ill-managed, and profess the court wants dignity, live in hopes of the prettist puppet-show that ever was seen. And indeed both those who were for



insisting upon the Dutch coming into the war, and they of the contrary opinion, all agree that the Dutch children are the worst rope dancers and tumblers that ever they saw. Lestock and Matthews are now examined before the Parliament as to their conduct in the Mediterranean; and, it is said by some who have read it, that Thompson's new play is equal to Otway's Orphan, and Rowe's Fair Penitent; in short, it is amazing how serious and how merry, how idle and how busy, this town is. In the morning all throng to the senate-house, and at night to the play-house. Those who bewail the poverty of the nation in the morning, part with gold for two hours entertainment at the oratorio at night. Those who talk of faction, did they but see how full of powder, and how empty of thought, the heads of the hydra appear to be, they would fear nothing from so spruce a set of senators. I think the town was never so gay or so fond of amusements. If you expect I should tell you any thing important in

the way of news, it is impossible ; all is so blended with pleasure and gaiety that the happiness of the nation, and the success of the puppet-show, are talked of in the same moment. My sister is much obliged to you and Mrs. Freind for your letters. Pray don't forget to set my mother's conscience to rest about this Bath water.

I am, my good friend,  
your's with great esteem and sincerity,  
ELIZ. MONTAGU.

*To the Same.*

*Sandleford, July 1, 1744.*

MOST EXCELLENT COUSIN,

INDOLENCE deprives me of half the pleasures of life. It is amazing, that having pen, ink, and leisure, I should not have wrote to you this month, though there has not a day passed of that month in

which I have not thought of you with esteem and regard, love of your conversation, and desire of your correspondence. When I had the pleasure of your letter it served me as sal-volatile and hartshorn, and saved one fee, at least, to the doctor, as well as a phial of drops at the apothecary's. I was really a good deal out of health when your letter came to my hands. I had a very violent cold, or a moderate fever, I am not critic enough in maladies to know which; however, a few days set me at ease, and a few more brought me to the happiness a mother finds in the company of her child, and that which every reasonable creature must find in the enjoyment of the country at this agreeable and delightful season. I am at a great loss to know what obligations you have to me; I can recollect none, though you seem to think you have. Is the world really so bad that it is become an obligation if we love those qualities we admire, and do not envy perfections we cannot attain? If so, you are really very much obliged to me;

for I take pleasure in your virtues, rejoice in your successes, wish prosperity to all your undertakings ; I am interested for your children, and am in love with your wife as much as you are ; your happiness makes a part of mine, and your excellent conduct a part of my good conscience ; so nearly am I interested for you, and my dear cousin Grace. I often think how happily you must pass your time in the groves at Witney ; sometimes contemplating the order of the universe, and beauty of the creation, with that dignity of reasoning which becomes philosophers ; then gently inclining to human affections, and admiring Master Bobby on his hobby-horse, and Miss with her coral. I rejoice at the recovery of her health ; I know the joy there is in seeing these tender objects of one's care thriving well, and increasing in health and strength. Punch is a fine fellow ; he is greatly improved since you saw him ; he is now an admirable tumbler ; I lay him down on a blanket on the ground every morning before he is dressed, and

at night when he is stripped, and there he rolls and tumbles about to his great delight; and I assure you it makes him very nimble, and I think it is a good practice; and if my god-daughter is not a prude, I would recommend the same practice to her, provided also that she be not apt to take cold. I hope you will not be too much surprized if you hear I have learned to lisp, and cannot walk securely without a leading-string; I keep company with my child till I fancy I shall grow like one. However, I cannot help giving myself up to the joys of the heart, and, immersed in parental felicity, I envy neither the refined pleasures of the modern Dilettanti, nor the ancient Epicureans; provided I have the delight and joy of the heart, I cannot complain if I am not made for higher pleasures. I expect my happiness from natural affections; the pleasures of contemplation are made for the few, the joys of the heart are known to all, and are not ingrafted on science, nor need to be cultivated by art. I spoke to the Dutchess

of P. that you had desired me to enquire where the fleams were had, that I might pay for them; she desired you would accept them, and said it was a trifle. I am sorry I cannot be so happy as to wait on you this summer at Witney, but we are bound for the north.

I am, my dear Sir, &c. &c.

E. MONTAGU.

*To the Dutchess of Portland.*

*Newbold Verdon, August 9, 1744.*

MADAM,

I DID not set out on my journey so soon as we proposed; the letter we sent to my brother Montagu having made the tour of England before it reached him, so we waited for an answer. The thirty-first of July we set out for Oxford; where we spent an agreeable day in seeing new objects and old friends. The good people

from Witney were so kind as to come over to see us, and shewed us what was best worth our attention. The University, I think, is finer than that at Cambridge, but does not excel so much as I had imagined ; Alma Mater however presides in great dignity there. I had hoped to have seen Mr. Potts, but was informed he was at Bullstrode, or I should have sent to have begged the favour of seeing him. The mighty Shaw had left the classic ground to take care of his glebe in the country. The first of August we went to Stowe, which is beyond description ; it gives the best idea of Paradise that can be : even Milton's images and descriptions fall short of it ; and indeed a Paradise it must be to every mind in a state of tolerable innocence. Without the soul's sunshine every object is dark ; but a contented mind, in so sweet a situation, must feel the most "sober certainty of waking bliss." The buildings are indeed, in themselves, disagreeably crowded, but being dedicated to patriots, heroes, law-givers, and poets, and men of

ingenuity and invention, they receive a dignity from the persons to whom they are consecrated. Others, that are sacred to imaginary powers, raise a pleasing enthusiasm in the mind. What different ideas arise in a walk in Kensington gardens, or the Mall, where almost every face wears impertinence! the greater part of them unknown, and those whom we are acquainted with, only discover to us that they are idle, foolish, vain, and proud. At Stowe you walk amidst heroes and deities, powers and persons, whom we have been taught to honour; who have embellished the world with arts, or instructed it in science; defended their country, and improved it. The temples that pleased me most, for the design to which they were consecrated, were those to Ancient Virtue, to Friendship, to the Worthies, and to Liberty. On Saturday last we arrived at my brother Montagu's; who has made this place one of the most charming and pleasant I ever saw; the gardens are delightful, the park very beautiful, the house neat and agreeable,



and every thing about it in an elegant taste. My brother has made great improvements. It was a very bad place when Lord Crewe left it to him, and had no ornament but fine wood ; now there is water in great beauty, grand avenues from every point, fine young plantations, and in short every thing that can please the eye. But nothing gives me so much pleasure as the obliging and friendly reception of the master, who has entertained us in a kind, an elegant, and magnificent manner. It is delightful to observe the regularity and order of the family, and the happiness that appears in the countenance of every friend and servant. We shall see T—— in our way ; but I take little delight in those shades from whence Astrea has been chased. I look upon the oaks that shade a virtuous owner as a kind of temple to innocence ; but when persons of another character take sanctuary there, I look on them only as canopies for luxury and idleness.

I am, Madam, &c. &c.

E. MONTAGU.

*To Mrs. Donnellan.*

*York, August, 1744.*

I AM now writing to you from the very place from whence I began my journey of life. You will think that I may feel some uneasiness on the reflection of returning to this place, after so many years wandering through the world, with so little improvement and addition of merit, which is all that time leaves behind it. Too true it is that reflection has given some pain, and cost me a sigh or two; but it is some comfort that my blank page has not been blotted with the stains of vice; if any good deeds shall ever be written there they will be legible, and suffer no various interpretations even from critics. Twenty-two years and ten months ago I was just the age my son is now: as his way through life will lie through the high roads of ambition and pleasure, he will hardly pass so unspotted, but, I hope, a better informed, traveller

than I have done through my little private path. His account will consist of many articles, pray God the balance may be right! I would have him think joy is for the pure of heart, and not giddily sacrifice the smallest part of integrity in hope of making large amends by deeds of estimation. But thus it is always with his sex, and a man thinks it is no more necessary to be as innocent as a woman, than to be as fair. Poor little man, may heaven protect him! I wish he may be of as contented a spirit at the same age as his mother; and that his cheerfulness too may arise, not from love of himself, but from the possession of good and amiable friends. I would, to this purpose, wish him as many brothers, but I have some private objections arising from self-love against that wish, so I will leave that to his merit and discernment, which to me has arisen from accident. I ought to have epistolized you before I came so near the end of my journey, but we filled up our time with seeing all the places that lay within our route; the first

was Oxford, which you know so well I shall say nothing about it, nor would the Muses permit my grey goose quill to describe their sacred haunt. From thence we went to Stowe, of which so much has been said and written, I shall only tell you how I was affected by the gardens, of which probably neither verse nor prose writer would ever inform you. It is indeed a princely garden, more like, I believe, to that where the sapient King held dalliance with his fair Ægyptian spouse, than to Paradise,—its beauties are the effects of expense and taste; the objects you see are various, yet the result is not variety. Lord Cobham has done by his garden as kings do by their subjects, made difference by title and artificial addition, where nature made none; yet altogether it is a pleasing scene, where a philosophic mind would enjoy full happiness, the disappointed ambitious some consolation. The buildings are many of them censured by connoisseurs as bad, however, their intention and use is good; they are, for the most part, dedicated to

the memory of the wise, the good, and great, so they raise in the ambitious a noble emulation, in the humble a virtuous veneration; kinds of homage that mend the heart that pays them. From Stowe we went to my brother Montagu's in Leicestershire, where we passed a week very agreeably. The next place we saw was T——; the house is large, but the company it has of late received makes one see it with prejudice; the luxury of a hog-stye must be disgustful; indeed I was glad to get out of the house, every creature in it, and every thing one saw was displeasing; as to the park, it wants nature's cheerful livery, the sprightly green; the famous cascade did not please me, who have seen some made by the bounteous hand of nature, to which man's magnificence is poor and *chetive*. From hence we came to York, where we have just been viewing the cathedral; of all the Gothic buildings I ever saw, the most noble, taken together, or considered in parts. Gothic architecture, like Gothic government, seems to make strength and

power of resistance its chief pride; this noble cathedral looks as if it might defy the consuming power of all-devouring Time. We are to visit the fine assembly room before we leave York, which, I hear, is built in the manner of an Ægyptian hall, or banquetting room. Dr. Shaw would tell us in what place Cleopatra would have chosen to sit. I must put an end to my letter, which has been something in the style of the raree-show man, “you shall see what you shall see.”

I am, dear Madam,  
your most sincere, and faithful  
humble servant,

E. MONTAGU.

*To the Dutchess of Portland.*

*Allerthorpe, Sep. 16, 1744.*

I AM much obliged to my dear friend for her tender concern for me; I would have wrote to you before, but I could not

command my thoughts so as to write what might be understood. I am well enough as to health of body, but God knows, the sickness of the soul is far worse; however, as so many good friends interest themselves for me, I am glad I am not ill. I know it is my duty to be resigned and to submit; many, far more deserving than I am, have been as unfortunate.\* I hope time will bring me comfort, I will assist it with my best endeavours; it is in afflictions like mine that reason ought to exert itself, else one should fall beneath the stroke. I apply myself to reading as much as I can, and I find it does me service. Poor Mr. Montagu shews me an example of patience and fortitude, and endeavours to comfort me, though undoubtedly he feels as much sorrow as I can do, for he loved his child as much as ever parent could do. My sister has been of great service to me: and on this, as on all other occasions, a most tender friend. I am much obliged to

\* Her son died of convulsion fits from cutting his teeth.

you for wishing yourself with so unhappy a companion ; your conversation would be a cordial to my spirits, but I should be afraid of being otherwise to your's. Adieu ; think of me as seldom as you can, and when you do, remember I am patient, and hope that the same Providence that snatched this dear blessing from me may give me others ; if not, I will endeavour to be content if I may not be happy. Heaven preserve, you, and your dear precious babes ; thank God ! you are far removed from my misfortune, and hardly can fear to be bereft of all.

I am,

ever your Grace's most affectionate,

E. M.



THE two volumes now published form a small part of a series of letters which have been returned, at different periods, during the life of Mrs. Montagu, and since her death, by the executors of the correspondents to whom they were addressed. It is a strong presumption of the estimation in which the letters were held, that they should have been all preserved by her friends from the early age of eleven years to the advanced period of eighty. On no occasion did she write foul copies, or keep copies of them, and very seldom did she recollect to affix a date. This omission has been, in some measure, supplied by the attention of a few of her correspondents to keep them in order, particularly by the Dutchess of Portland, who added the date in pencil, in many cases, and caused them to be pasted in a book ; but the greatest part of the whole series has been arranged only by an observation of their contents,

and a consideration of the political events, or other circumstances, mentioned in them. The confusion in which they were found, and the difficulty of the arrangement, will not be easily conceived.

They would have been sooner offered to the public notice, if the Editor, in the eagerness to discharge a duty so delightful to his feelings, had not been induced to persevere, with too little intermission, in the labour of the arrangement ; and, by this means, to encrease to an alarming degree a weakness of sight, which other circumstances had previously occasioned. The publication is here termed a duty, because it was frequently enjoined by Mrs. Montagu herself in consequence of the reiterated request of many of her correspondents, upon whose taste and judgment she had every reason to rely. Lord Lyttelton and Lord Bath in particular, her favourite friends, will be found in the course of the correspondence strongly and repeatedly urging their future publication, as considering that they exhibit the fertility and versatility

of her powers of understanding, and the excellence of her disposition, in a more complete manner than any other species of composition. The same opinion, and the same request, was expressed by many eminent persons, in which number I shall only mention Dr. Young, Mr. Gilbert West, Lord Chatham, Mr. Garrick, Mr. Stillingfleet, Lord Kaimes and Dr. Beattie, Sir Joshua Reynolds and Mr. Burke, Mrs. Carter and Mrs. Vesey.

The early letters, now presented to the public, afford certainly an unfavourable specimen, if they are considered merely with a view to correctness of composition, or as models of epistolary style. They are frequently defective in these particulars, and these defects have not been softened by the editor, as he has thought it more fair to exhibit a real portrait than an imaginary resemblance. He has struck out many insignificant passages relating to private concerns, and many anecdotes and observations of a personal nature ; but he is sensible that on most occasions when he has been

induced most largely to suppress, the letters have suffered materially in their appearance of originality and of familiar ease.

It is hoped that the reader will constantly bear in mind the early age of the writer, the less cultivated state of the education of women, at that period, and the gaiety of familiar intercourse between girls accustomed to the dissipation of the fashionable world. An acknowledged superiority in wit and beauty may be allowed at so early an age to excite some sparks of vanity, and to give delight in the scenes best adapted to *display the pre-eminence* so largely bestowed by nature. But when it is found, in the future remaining volumes, that she became in her middle age as remarkable for discretion of conduct, and propriety of demeanour, as she had been in her childhood and youth for vivacity and sprightliness ; the progress of her disposition will appear to be no less interesting than the improvement of her taste, and the enlargement of her faculties. She

was an exemplary wife to a man much older than herself, and proved herself worthy to be the bosom friend of a husband whose strict honour and integrity, as a gentleman, and a member of Parliament, were not less conspicuous than his unwearied diligence, and deep research as a man of science.

We shall find her to be the most approved friend of the wisest and best men of her age, as well as the most admired companion of the wittiest. Her conversation was sought by all who were distinguished for learning, for politeness, or for any of the qualities which give lustre, or dignity, or influence. The scholar and the statesman were alike desirous of her society ; and she was so fortunate as to acquire the esteem and attachment of some men who united both characters. She was permitted to entwine her myrtle with the bays of the poet, to share the counsels of the politician, and to estimate the works of the historian, the critic, and the orator. She subdued her propensity to satire ; and if

her wit was so abundant by nature as to be inextinguishable, she found means so to temper its lustre, that it should no longer dazzle by its brightness, or excite apprehension of a mischievous consequence. In her youth her beauty was most admired in the peculiar animation and expression of her blue eyes, with high arched dark eye-brows, and in the contrast of her brilliant complexion with her dark brown hair. She was of the middle stature, and stooped a little, which gave an air of modesty to her countenance, in which the features were otherwise so strongly marked as to express an elevation of sentiment befitting the most exalted condition. As she advanced in age, her appearance was distinguished by that superiority of demeanour which is acquired by the habit of intercourse with persons of the most cultivated talents and the most polished manners. Her very look bespoke the fire of genius, arising from strength of understanding, refinement of taste, and solidity of judgment. If to these qualifications we add the

soundness of principle, the tenderness of benevolence, and the calm piety of her latter years, we shall behold a picture of an individual who might be justly termed an ornament to her sex and country.

The reader has some distance to travel before he arrives at the period in which Mrs. Montagu attained her greatest perfection in epistolary writing. The Editor will be excused if he entertains a hope that the reader will then be induced to allow that few persons in any language can be thought to surpass her in this species of composition.

The remaining part of the series will be published by degrees, as the health and leisure of the Editor will admit, and as the curiosity or approbation of the public may seem to require.

END OF VOL. II.











